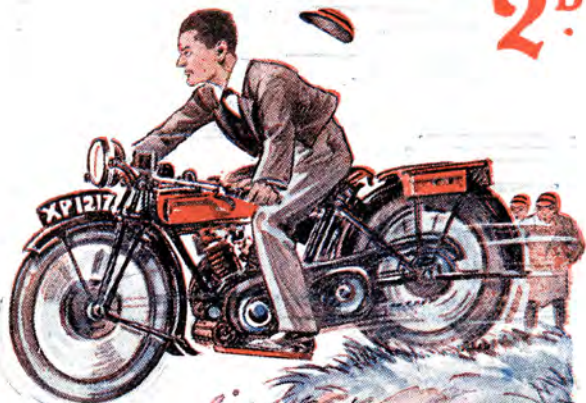


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**THE SCHEMER
OF THE REMOVE!**

Grand Story of School-life and Adventure.

Wray Series No. 91.

OUT ON WEDNESDAY,

January 26th, 1929.



Lower and lower came Jimmy Potts' foot, and at last Vivian Travers was able to grab it. Jimmy gulped with horror as he felt the other's dead weight on his foot ; felt his hands slipping from their precarious grip on the face of the cliff !

This Series Is The "Goods"—Start Reading It Now, Chums!



By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

Vivian Travers has always been a reckless chap, and when Gulliver and Bell dare him to leap over a ravine on his motor-bike, he promptly takes them on. That is only one of the many thrills in this fine yarn, lads, so get started on it now.—Ed.

CHAPTER I.

A Package for Vivian Travers I

JIMMY POTTS, the boot-boy of the Ancient House at St. Frank's, stood outside the door of Study A, in the Remove passage, and tapped upon the panel.

"Come in!" said a languid voice.

Potts opened the door, and found Vivian Travers sprawling in one of the easy chairs before the fire. Afternoon lessons were just over, and Travers was enjoying ten minutes' relaxation, after the recent toil of the class-room.

"Hallo, Jimmy, dear old fellow," he said cheerily. "Come in! Shut the door, and make yourself at home!"

"Chuck it, Travers, you know!" said Jimmy, with remarkable familiarity for a boot-boy. "Go easy, for goodness' sake!"

"Chuck it?" repeated Vivian Travers. "Go easy? Oh, you mean about me being

pally with you? Forget it, Jimmy! We're quite alone here, and even if anybody overheard us, what does it matter? I go my own road—and if I like to be familiar with the boot-boy, it's my business!"

"But it might be serious for me if the truth came out," said Jimmy Potts, with concern.

"That's one way of looking at it, of course," nodded Travers. "By Jove! Wouldn't the Remove look up if it knew that its boot-boy was really Sir James Potts, Bart., and that he was recently the Junior Captain of Beccleston College!"

"I say, *do* shut up!" urged Jimmy.

"All right, dear old fellow—all right!" grinned Vivian Travers. "Let's forget it. There's no disgrace in being a boot-boy, and since your family has fallen upon hard times, and your mother is earning a living at the Moor View School as a housekeeper, there's all the more

credit due to you. Well, what is it? Just dropped in for a chat?"

"No, of course not," said Jimmy Potts. "There's a big crate outside for you."

"A big crate?"

"Yes," said the boot-boy. "It's round at the back—just came in the big motor-van from the goods station. It looks like a motor-bike."

"That's not very surprising—because it is a motor-bike!" said Travers calmly. "I had the advice note this morning. Good! Supposing we go round, Jimmy, and unpack the velocipede? Let us surprise the natives!"

"Can you ride a motor-bike?" asked Jimmy.

"Ride?" said Travers. "Dear old fellow, I'm as much at home on a motor-bike as a baby in a cradle! In other words, and without being unduly egotistical, I think I can claim that I'm a bit of an expert. So the old grid has come? Wonderful! I didn't expect it for at least a week!"

Travers rose from the chair, and strolling over to the door, opened it. On the instant Jimmy Potts became rigid and respectful. For outside the voices of other juniors could be heard.

"So here we are, then!" said Travers genially, as he paused outside the door. "Coming round to the back with me, you fellows?"

"Half a minute!" said Edward Oswald Handforth, of Study D. "There's a whacking great crate out there, Travers—and it's addressed to you! Somebody says there's a motor-bicycle inside it. Is that right?"

"Perfectly right," said Travers. "What about it?"

"Well, of all the nerve!" said Handforth indignantly. "I'm the only chap in the Remove with a motor—and now you come along with a giddy bike! And you're only a new chap, too!"

"Cheese it, Handy!" grinned Church. "Travers can have a motor-bike if he likes, can't he?"

Handforth frowned.

"Well I suppose he can," he said grudgingly. "But he needn't think that he can beat me in my Austin Seven!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm frightfully sorry, dear old fellow, but I have an idea that my super-special will make rings round your dear little motor-pram!" said Travers coolly.

"My what?" yelled Handforth.

"No offence, of course," went on Travers. "The Austin Seven is one of the most wonderful little cars in the world—probably the most wonderful. At the same time, it

can't hope to compete against a specially-tuned motor-bike."

"Rats!" said Handforth gruffly. "I'll beat you any day in my Austin Seven! Why, I'm always passing motor-bikes on the road!"

"When they're coming the opposite way, you mean?" asked Travers blandly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No, I don't!" howled Handforth. "I mean that I overtake them, you cackling idiot!"

"Oh, well, we won't argue," said Travers. "Sorry to tear myself away, Handforth, but I'm going outside with Potts, and we're going to unpack the jigger at once. I might see you later—on the road. Anybody coming along, to lend a hand?"

There was no lack of response, for everybody wanted to be on the spot when Vivian Travers' new motor-bike was unpacked. Indeed, by the time Travers reached the great crate, half the Remove was on the spot, to say nothing of a heavy sprinkling of the Fourth and the Third. The Lower School was taking a great interest in this occasion.



CHAPTER 2.

The Super-Special!

HERE weren't many motor-bicycles at St. Frank's. A few fellows in the Senior School had their Triumphs and Douglas's and their Dunells, but these lucky fellows were few and far between.

In the Junior School, ordinary "jiggers" were the usual form of locomotion. It was generally admitted, however, that the day was fast approaching when quite a number of juniors would have their own motor-bikes. But Vivian Travers, the new boy in the Remove, was the first junior to set this new fashion.

Consequently, everybody was intensely interested.

Jimmy Potts, as was only fitting, did most of the heavy work. He unfastened the crate, and helped energetically in the task of removing all the wrappings from the machine itself. Jimmy would have done just the same, even if he had not been the boot-boy. But, in his present position, this kind of work was expected of him.

"Of course," said Handforth, with satisfaction, "you won't be able to ride the thing to-day, Travers."

"Why not?"

"Well, you'll have to get it licensed, and—"

"Sorry to disappoint you, dear old fellow—but the machine is already licensed," said Travers coolly. "She's a new one, of course, but I've already had her on the road—I've put her through her paces. I really meant to ride her down here, but, to tell the truth, I forgot all about her."

"You forgot your motor-bike?" asked Fullwood, staring.

"Absolutely forgot her!" nodded Travers. "So I sent a wire to the pater, and he bunged her on the railway. Well, here she is! Not a bad-looking old creak, eh?"

The machine was, indeed, a spanking new one. It was one of the very latest speedsters, with a vivid red tank and low handle-bars. Most of those juniors eyed the machine with frank envy and admiration. It was just the kind of motor-bike they had always longed to own for themselves.

"Lucky beast!" said Buster Boots, of the Fourth.

"Check, I call it!" said Hubbard sourly. "Swanking about here with his silly motor-bike!"

Vivian Travers looked pained.

"Have I committed some offence in having my motor-bike sent down to the school?" he asked, looking round. "Great Samson! Swanking is a crime that I hate! If there's any question of that sort, I'll have the jigger sent straight back home!"

Nipper, the popular captain of the Remove, clapped Travers on the back, and chuckled.

"Don't take any notice of these jealous asses, Travers," he said genially. "Anybody at St. Frank's can own a motor-bike, if he's lucky enough to have one. I shouldn't be surprised if I'm the next," he added dreamily. "The gov'nor has been talking about it lately, and I believe I shall click in another week or two!"

"That's good!" said Travers, with a sigh. "I hate to be the only one!"

"You'd better go easy on this thing!" remarked De Valerie, as he turned round from examining the machine. "By gad! She looks a speedy sort of beggar! Unless you're jolly careful, Travers, you'll go and kill yourself!"

"She's as docile as a lamb," said Travers, with a laugh. "I'll tell you what! Give me some petrol, and I'll give her a trial run round the Houses now."

"But it's not allowed!" said Nipper. "You mustn't ride within the grounds, Travers."

"Oh, I'll chance it," said the new boy.

"Who cares? I can easily pretend that I didn't know the ropes!"

"But Nipper's just told you!" said Handforth, glaring.

"I've got a rotten memory!" replied Travers blandly.

Some petrol was quickly procured—Jimmy Potts volunteering to run off to the garage in order to get some. Incidentally, Potts bagged a two-gallon can which really belonged to Handforth, but the volcanic leader of Study D did not know this at the time.

The petrol was poured into the tank, and the oil reservoir proved to be nearly full. Travers straddled himself over the machine and put his foot on the kick-starter.

"Well, let's go!" he said cheerily.

One downward plunge, and the engine commenced firing with a low-toned, powerful beat. Indeed, it was a throaty bark, particularly when Travers opened the throttle.

"Stand away, you fellows!" shouted Nipper. "Travers tells us that he can ride—but we're not sure yet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If he's ass enough to ride round the Triangle, good luck to him!" grinned Fullwood. "But he won't go far, you know! He'll soon be pulled up by a master, or one of the prefects!"

With a roar of acceleration, Vivian Travers slipped in the clutch. The next moment the super-special was gliding off round the angle of the West House, with a number of juniors in full pursuit, and with others lining the "track," and cheering vigorously.

But just at that moment a small car came careering into view, and a roar of laughter went up when it was seen that Edward Oswald Handforth was at the wheel, and that Church and McClure were sitting at the back.

"I'll show him!" roared Handforth defiantly. "He thinks he can beat my Austin, does he? All right—I'm game for a race round the Houses, and blow the consequences!"

CHAPTER 3.

Making Rings Round Old Handy!



NIPPER, with Tre-gellis - West and Watson, stood looking on, and Nipper was frowning.

"Of course, Handforth would do a thing like that!" he said tartly. "The chances are that Travers would have buzzed out

into the road after a brief ride round, and nobody would have been the wiser. But if these two asses are going to have a race round the school, there'll be the dickens to pay!"

"Well, it's their own doing, dear old boy," said Sir Montie Tregellis-West. "Let them go ahead! Why should we worry? It's not our business—it isn't, really!"

"Of course not," grinned Tommy Watson. "My hat! Just look at that!"

Handforth, with a display of utter recklessness, had steered his little Austin round the Fountain, in the centre of the Triangle. Juniors were scooting in all directions, so as to get out of the way. And in the rear came Vivian Travers, bending low over the handle-bars of his machine, thoroughly enjoying this impromptu contest.

"Go it, ye cripples!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good gad!" ejaculated Archie Glen-thorne. "It strikes me, laddies, that they will be cripples before long, what? I mean to say, all this dashing hither and thither, and this way and that way! Odds risks and hazards!"

That latter remark of Archie's was occasioned by a seemingly suicidal move on the part of Travers. Accelerating with incredible swiftness, his machine roared past the Austin Seven, cut right across its bows, and then swung round in a giddy half-circle, Travers bending over so low that everybody expected to see him skid wildly on the gravel.

But, by some miracle, Travers controlled the machine, and again he tore off, and cut across the Austin's bows once more. It was an exhibition of utter recklessness—of foolhardy daring.

If the onlookers had not been so startled by Travers' display of riding ability, they would have been convulsed by the expression on Handforth's face.

For the great Edward Oswald was not only amazed, but he was outraged. Church and McClure, in the back of the Austin, were scared out of their wits, and far too occupied to give any attention to Handforth's face. At any moment, they were expecting to be pitched out.

"Here, ease up, Handy!" panted Church desperately.

"Did you see him?" roared Handforth.

"By George! Absolutely making rings round me!"

With a powerful purring roar from her twin exhaust pipes, the super-special went tearing off round towards the rear of the East House. There were a few moments of

quietness, and then a shout went up from East Arch.

"Look out!" roared Armstrong. "Here he comes—tearing across East Square!"

"Stand out of the way there, you chaps!"

"Look out, Handy!" yelled Nipper. "Mind where you're going!"

For Handforth was steering up the Triangle again—and in another second or two he would pass the entrance to East Arch. Travers, coming across the square, could naturally see nothing of the Austin, and a collision seemed inevitable.

"Stop!" shrieked a dozen voices.

But Handforth took no notice. He wasn't going to stop for anybody! In the confusion, he had lost Travers altogether, and he was now trying to find him! Unless a miracle happened he would certainly find him within the next two seconds!

Zurrrrrh!

An awful cry of horror went up as the super-special came charging headlong out of East Arch. And at the same second Handforth, in his Austin Seven, drew level. A broadside collision seemed so certain that many juniors involuntarily closed their eyes.

But those who kept their eyes open saw something which made them blink.

For Vivian Travers, with a skill that was uncanny to see, slewed his machine round in a half-circle with such violence that the back wheel positively skidded completely round. There was a smother of gravel, a cloud of smoke, and the motor-bike missed the Austin's rear by about three inches. Then it roared serenely on, Travers opening the throttle again, and grinning hugely.

"Oh, the hopeless idiot!" said Nipper with a gulp.

"Yes, by jingo, what a piece of driving!" said Reggie Pitt admiringly. "How on earth did he do it? It wasn't a fluke, either."

"No; it was sheer skill!" agreed Nipper. "Travers is hot on that motor-bike! But there's no earthly need for this senseless display! It's all Handy's fault—and the best thing we can do is to grab him, and put an end to the whole business!"

But grabbing Handforth was not quite so easy as it sounded. By this time he had vanished round the angle of the Ancient House, and everybody was wondering what would happen next. Travers had disappeared, too, having just passed out of sight beyond the chapel.

Juniors began cautiously to move away from the walls, but they were on tip-toe—

ready to dodge back at the slightest sign of danger.

"Here he comes!" went up a sudden shout.

"By Jove, yes!" said Pitt. "Right across West Square—straight for the Arch!"

It was Vivian Travers who was returning, having made a circuit of the West House in the meantime. And just at that moment, to make matters more interesting, Mr. Horace Pycraft came striding through East Arch, right into the centre of the arena!



CHAPTER 4.

Getting Exciting!

MR. HORACE PYCRAFT was notoriously unpopular, and there were good and

sufficient reasons for his unpopularity.

To begin with, the master of the Fourth was an inquisitive individual. Secondly, he was snobbish to a degree, and always favoured those fellows who were well-connected, or rich. Thirdly, he had a nasty habit of appearing when he was least wanted.

Mr. Pycraft sensed that something was wrong as soon as he set foot into the Triangle. He adjusted his glasses, and looked round sharply. Juniors were standing all over the place, most of them with expectant expressions on their faces.

"What is this?" demanded Mr. Pycraft harshly. "Armstrong! Boots! What is the matter here? Answer me!"

There was a dead silence—except for the ever-growing "zurrerrrh" of Travers' motor-cycle as it came careered across the West Square.

"Do you hear me, Boots?" thundered Mr. Pycraft.

John Busterfield Boots looked round desperately.

"Yes, sir, but—" he began.

Then he broke off, for at that moment Travers came shooting through West Arch, and Mr. Horace Pycraft gave such a jump that he dropped his glasses.

"Look out, sir!" shouted a score of voices.

There was really no danger, but Mr. Pycraft was flustered. The sudden appearance of that red, demoniac motor-cycle had taken him completely by surprise. Moreover, the machine was apparently making a bee-line for him, and to Mr. Pycraft it seemed that it was coming along at about two hundred miles an hour.

"Help!" he bleated.

He staggered backwards, tripped on some loose stones, and sat down. Unfortunately for Mr. Pycraft, he sat down in a spot where

there was a considerable depression in the ground. It wouldn't have been so bad if that depression had been empty. But it wasn't empty. It was filled with muddy water.

Splash!

Mr. Pycraft sat in the very centre of the puddle, and cascades of water spurted out from all sides of him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bull's-eye, by Jove!"

"Ha ha, ha!"

Zurrerrrh!

Without his glasses, Mr. Pycraft was at a disadvantage. He saw something red flash by him. He was aware of a blurred vision, and a terrific noise. Then the thing had vanished—straight into East Arch, and away.

"What—what was that?" gasped Mr. Pycraft, struggling to his feet, and dancing up and down madly. "Who was it?"

He did not even wait to hear any answers—even if they had been forthcoming. He dashed through East Arch, and raced across the Square, having some forlorn hope, perhaps, of catching the culprit. But by this time Travers and the super-special had slowed round the angle of the Modern House, and were nowhere in sight.

Handforth, incidentally, had finished his own exhibition. Not voluntarily, of course, but Church and McClure, desiring to live, had acted very forcibly.

As the Austin had slowed down to negotiate a corner, Handforth's chums had seized their leader, and Church had made a grab for the handbrake, and had pulled it on with all his strength. Consequently, the Austin, in spite of its open throttle, had lurched to a standstill.

Handforth found it impossible to start off again—mainly because a dozen Removites had lifted Handforth clean out of the car, and had sat upon him. Even the best of motor drivers are inclined to find driving difficult under these conditions.

In the Triangle, Nipper was looking very concerned now.

"Look here, you chaps, we shall have to stop Travers the next time he comes round!" he said, appealing to a crowd of the others. "The silly ass'll get himself sacked, or something!"

"Well, it was partly Handforth's fault," said Fullwood.

"So it was—but that's not much excuse," said Nipper. "Handforth isn't here now—some of the fellows are attending to him, I believe! Our job is to grab Travers, and make him stop!"

"Absolutely!" agreed Archie Glenthorne. "I mean to say, the lad appears to have gone slightly mildewed in the attic. I mean to say, absolutely off his good old rocker! I rather think we ought to rally round!"

And Archie Glenthorne strode off into the Triangle, looking for the culprit. He hadn't far to seek, for at that moment Vivian

Travers came shooting back, appearing suddenly from behind the gymnasium.

Unfortunately, Archie Glenthorne was walking in the opposite direction, and when he suddenly glanced round, having heard the familiar roar, the red racing machine was practically upon him.

It was quite evident that Vivian Travers was doing this sort of thing deliberately. He swerved towards Archie out of sheer devilment—or perhaps it was only exuberance of spirit. Anyhow, Archie thought that his last moment had come.

"What ho!" he howled. "I mean to say—help! Tally ho, and so forth!"

The noble scion of the House of Glenthorne leapt about three feet into the air, and it was a sideways leap. Unhappily, Archie had quite overlooked the fact that the fountain pool was alongside.

So when he came down, he didn't alight upon solid ground, as he had expected, but he plunged into the icy water of the pool, and went completely under the surface.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Vivian Travers, who was thoroughly enjoying himself, laughed as much as anybody, and he slowed round in a giddy circle, almost in his own length. He was just in time to see Archie Glenthorne's head emerge from the surface of the fountain pool.

By this time the spectators had forgotten all about the risks of Travers' reckless exhibition of driving, and they were yelling with laughter.



CHAPTER 5.

Rough on the Professor

HOA! Ahoy, there!" gurgled Archie Glenthorne, as he struggled with the water pouring from him in cascades. "Phipps! S.O.S., dash it! Man the life-boats, and all that sort of thing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A crowd of fellows came round the fountain pool, and Archie was gingerly helped out. "Laddies, be good enough to send for good old Phipps!" bleated Archie, with chattering teeth. "Good gad! I feel like a dashed channel swimmer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Archie was taken indoors hastily by Alf Brent and Fullwood and one or two other juniors. The most astonishing feature of the whole affair was that no prefects or masters had appeared yet—with the exception, of course, of Mr. Pyecraft, who didn't count much. Anyhow. But perhaps the juniors had forgotten that only two or three minutes had elapsed since Vivian Travers had started off on his machine. Things had been happening very rapidly.

"It's all very well to talk about stopping

him, but how can we do it?" asked Tommy Watson dubiously. "Just look what happened to Archie! When Travers comes tearing past at fifty miles an hour, we can't collar him, can we?"

"Begad! Hardly, old boy," said Tregellis-West.

"Well, we must do something!" remarked Nipper.

He strode out into the Triangle, and listened. The hum of Travers' machine could be heard from the East Square, and a moment later Travers himself roared through the archway. Nipper ran forward.

"Hi! Wait a minute!" shouted Nipper.

"All right!" sang out Travers. "I'll be back in a minute! Just enjoying myself!"

"You silly idiot!" roared Nipper. "Why can't you stop? Or if you want a ride—the gates are open!"

"Thanks for the tip!" yelled Travers, as he turned round in the saddle. "Yes, I'll give her a run up the road!"

He had been steering round towards the gymnasium, but now, in consequence of Nipper's suggestion, he changed his mind. However, it was a risky proceeding for any motor-cyclist to change his mind at such a spot. The Triangle, and all sections of the school grounds, were supposed to be quite safe for walking purposes, and people were naturally unprepared for any sudden emergencies.

Professor Sylvester Tucker, for example, had not the faintest inkling of peril as he wandered amiably round the gymnasium.

Professor Tucker was the science master, and he was notoriously absent-minded. This afternoon, for example, he had ventured forth—totally unconscious of his incongruous appearance—wearing a heavy overcoat, with a straw hat to surmount it. To add to the bizarre nature of his appearance, he had quite forgotten to don his boots, and he had been for a walk in his carpet slippers.

"Look out, sir!" went up a general shout.

"Go easy, Travers!"

Travers, who had been looking round at the moment, now saw Professor Tucker for the first time. And Professor Tucker saw Travers.

"Good Heavens!" ejaculated the science master. "I must be on the public highway! And I really thought that I was in the school grounds!"

Travers swerved, but unfortunately Professor Tucker moved in that same direction, and the machine still came bearing straight down upon him.

"Hold still, sir!" roared Travers, in alarm. He had had a good deal of experience of motor-cycling, and he knew what could happen when a pedestrian hesitated and repeatedly changed his mind.

Professor Tucker not only refrained from holding still, but he acted with the agility of a fag. He was standing beneath one of the old chestnut trees, and, instead of dodging, he leaped straight upwards and grasped at an

overhanging branch. It was a remarkable piece of work, and it undoubtedly saved the professor from a nasty accident.

For, as he swung himself up, the motor-cycle passed underneath him, Travers bending low over the handlebars. By the time the professor dropped to the ground he was surrounded by a dozen juniors, and the motor-cycle had completely vanished.

"It's all right, sir—you're not hurt!" said Gresham briskly.

"No, no, of course not!" said the professor, looking round with some confusion. "Dear me! What an extraordinary thing!"

"What is, sir?" asked Duncan.

"An hallucination, of course," said Pro-

"It's tea-time, sir," said Gresham hintingly.

"Yes, yes, to be sure!" nodded the professor. "Tea-time—of course! Let's go indoors!"

And, much to the relief of the crowd, the science master toddled away, fully convinced that he had been imagining things. It was just as well, for there was now a chance that Vivian Travers would be able to escape the punishment that he undoubtedly deserved. There was Mr. Pycraft to be considered, but the master of the Fourth wasn't greatly to be feared, anyhow. Even if he reported the affair, Travers would probably get off with a few lines.

It was only his remarkable agility that saved Professor Tucker from a nasty accident. He leaped upwards and grabbed at an overhanging branch, just as Vivian Travers hurtled past on his motor-bike!



fessor Tucker testily. "A mere delusion—nothing else! But, do you know, boys, I could have sworn that a motor-cycle was here. Ridiculous!"

"Oh, rather, sir!" said Gresham, with a gulp.

"And there was I, climbing into that tree like—a monkey!" went on Professor Tucker, with a snort. "I can well imagine, boys, that you must have wondered at my singular conduct. I can well understand—Good gracious! Why am I wearing my slippers?" he went on, staring at his feet. "How remarkable! Slippers! And I could have sworn that I have been walking over the meadows!"

But it wasn't to be, it seemed. For, just as Travers came round in another swinging circle, Mr. Nelson Lee, the Housemaster of the Ancient House, emerged from the lobby; he was accompanied by some prefects.

The Housemaster-detective was just in time to see Travers perform another hair-raising stunt on his motor-cycle—that of doing a figure eight. It was really wonderful the way he braked suddenly, skidded, and then accelerated at the right moment. But Nelson Lee was not in the mood to appreciate marvellous stunt-riding like this.

He came forward, a stern look on his face.

"Now we shall see the fur fly!" said De Valerie, with conviction.



CHAPTER 6.

Travers' Way!

VIVIAN TRAVERS was as cool as a cucumber as he brought his machine to a standstill and remained straddled over it, listening with an expert ear to the purr of the exhaust.

He had had his trial, and he was satisfied that the machine was running perfectly. All the other juniors were satisfied that Vivian Travers was a demon on a motor-cycle. It was not merely a question of clever riding, but of uncannily skilful riding. Travers had demonstrated to all that he was a perfect master of his mount. Taking the most hair-raising chances, he had come through safely every time. And not one of his manoeuvres had been due to a fluke. It was obvious that Vivian Travers was "hot stuff" on a motor-cycle!

Nelson Lee came striding over the Triangle, and the prefects went round, telling all the other fellows to get indoors. Not that much notice was taken of this command. The majority of the fellows moved away a bit and then stopped, just to see what would happen.

"Travers!" said the Housemaster-detective. "Stop that engine!"

"Certainly, sir," said Travers, closing the throttle.

The purring of the engine died away at once, and Travers got out of the saddle, kicked the stand down, and pulled the machine upon it.

"Rather a neat little bus, sir, don't you think?" he asked politely. "She runs like a dream. Capable of eighty miles an hour, too, on the straight."

"I am not concerned with the performance of your motor-cycle, Travers," said Nelson Lee sternly. "I have been informed that you have been racing round the Triangle and the Squares. Is that true?"

"Perfectly true, sir—in a sense," replied Travers coolly. "To begin with, I wasn't racing. I was just cruising round, giving the old jigger a trial."

"I am glad that you admit it, Travers."

"Of course I admit it, sir," said Vivian Travers, in surprise. "Everybody saw me!"

"I cannot possibly think, Travers, that you are ignorant of the fact that motor-cycling in the school grounds is absolutely prohibited," said Nelson Lee, eyeing the new boy with a keen eye. "It is opposed to all the rules—"

"Well, I'm hanged!" said Travers. "Is that so, sir? I'm awfully sorry! I didn't know!"

"My hat!" whispered Tommy Watson indignantly. "The awful fibber!"

Mr. Pyecraft came hurrying up, and he gave a shout of triumph as he observed Travers.

"One moment, Mr. Lee—one moment," panted the Fourth Form-master. "I want that boy! The young rascal! He nearly killed me five minutes ago!"

"There is no need to get excited, Mr. Pyecraft," said Nelson Lee, as he turned and looked at the Form-master. "If you have any complaint to make against this boy—"

"Complaint!" shouted Mr. Pyecraft. "Why, good Heavens, the young idiot nearly ran me down! He came tearing along on that—that atrocity of his at sixty miles an hour."

"Oh, draw it mild, sir!" said Travers. "I've got a speedometer on the machine, you know, and it wasn't doing anything like sixty. When I passed you I was only going at thirty-eight."

"Is that true, Travers?" said Lee sharply. "Were you travelling at thirty-eight miles an hour in the Triangle, here?"

"Why, yes, sir."

"Then you were not only reckless, Travers, but blameworthy in the extreme," said the Housemaster. "Whether you knew riding in the Triangle was prohibited or not, your own common-sense should have told you not to go careering about at that insane speed. You might have injured somebody."

"Oh, rather not, sir," said Travers, shaking his head. "I'm a bit of an expert on this machine. She was under perfect control all the time, and—"

"That is quite sufficient, Travers," interrupted Nelson Lee. "As you are a new boy, and as you tell me that you did not know the rules, I shall let you off lightly. But in future, you must understand that any riding within the school premises will be punishable by a severe caning, and your machine will be prohibited."

"I'll remember, sir," said Travers, nodding. "Thanks awfully for the tip. We live and learn, don't we, sir? No riding in the Triangle, eh? No riding round the Houses? All right, sir—leave it to me!"

"Aren't you going to punish the boy?" demanded Mr. Pyecraft fiercely.

"Of course not, sir," said Travers, giving him a sweet smile. "Mr. Lee has just given me a warning, so everything is all right. I'm frightfully sorry I scared you just now. Quite unintentional, sir. But if you had kept still you needn't have—"

"That will do, Travers," said Lee curtly. "I am inclined to think that you have deliberately broken the rules, but I shall give you the benefit of the doubt. Take your machine away, and never let me see you riding it in the school grounds again."

"Thanks awfully, sir," said Travers, nodding. "I shan't forget."

He walked away, and Nelson Lee took the excited Mr. Pyecraft by the arm, and they both went off together. As soon as they had vanished a crowd of fellows surrounded Travers and his machine.

"You awful fibber!" said Watson angrily. "What do you mean by telling Mr. Lee that you weren't told?"

"Eh?" said Travers, with a grin. "My dear fellow, why should I tell him a thing like that? Do you think I'm anxious to do two or three hundred lines, or take a swish-
ing? It was the easiest way out."

"Yes—by telling a whopper!" said Fullwood, glaring.

"There are whoppers—and whoppers!" replied Travers lightly. "Well, we've had some sport—so why grumble?"

He walked off, and the other juniors drifted away to their various Houses, remembering that it was tea-time.

"Blessed if I know what to make of that chap!" said Nipper, frowning. "He didn't mind telling a lie just then to save himself, and yet he seems so decent in many other ways. He's a fine footballer, and—"

"And yet he smokes!" said Watson. "He's always having cigarettes in his study!"

"Yes, he's a queer mixture," said Nipper. "I can't quite decide whether he's genuinely decent, with a kink in his nature, or whether he's a rotter, with a love of sport!"



CHAPTER 7.

The "Dare"!

WHEN Travers arrived in study A he found Gulliver and Bell in possession, and tea was practically ready.

"Good men!" said Travers approvingly, as he closed the door. "That's the style! Always do your duty, and we shan't have any quarrelling!"

Gulliver and Bell said nothing. They hardly knew what to make of that remark. Since Vivian Travers had arrived, they had had quite a good time generally. But they couldn't blind themselves to the fact that Travers had completely taken charge of them. He dominated them in every way, and it was a sort of settled understanding that they should prepare tea, wash up, and do all the work about the study. There was something very compelling in Vivian Travers' personality.

But Gulliver and Bell did not complain. Travers was very generous with his cigarettes, and he had lent small sums to his study mates without the slightest quail. Yes, it was far better to keep on his right side.

And although Gulliver and Bell rather resented Travers' bossing ways, they submitted. They couldn't do anything else, for they had weak natures, and they were very easily ruled by this remarkable new boy.

"What an ass you were, Travers, to go tearing round the school buildings like that!" said Gulliver, as he poured out the tea. "You might have knocked somebody down!"

"Not on your life!" laughed Travers, as he sank into the easy-chair—which the other

two had left for him. "You fellows seem to be under the same delusion as all the rest. I'm a rider, not a novice. Do you think I can't control a motor-bike?"

"Yes, but you *did* shoot round at a terrific speed!" said Bell argumentatively.

"Is that what you call speed?" said Travers, with a certain amount of mockery in his voice. "Speed, dear old fellows, is something that you evidently haven't seen. The old velocipede was throttled down all the time. If you want some real speed, I'm willing to show it to you. And if you'd like to witness a few stunts, just say the word. I'm a very obliging fellow."

"What do you mean—stunts?" asked Gulliver.

"Well—stunts," replied Travers. "You've seen stunts on the films, haven't you? I remember once I saw a fellow ride clean through a sheet of plate-glass, and it was supposed to be a marvellous performance. But anybody could do it—providing he had the nerve, and providing he went at sufficient speed."

"I suppose you could do it?" sneered Bell. "Naturally I could," said Travers. "Pass the sardines, Gully, dear old fellow. I hope they're a better quality than the ones we had two days ago. I can still taste the infernal things!"

Gulliver passed the sardines, and there was a grin on his face.

"It's all very well for you to boast, Travers, but you can't kid us with that yarn!" he said. "You know jolly well that there's no earthly prospect of you getting a chance to ride your motor-bike through a sheet of plate-glass."

"Does that mean that you believe I couldn't do it?"

"Yes, it does!" said Gulliver. "You're only swanking!"

Vivian Travers looked pained.

"That's a nasty one!" he said, leaning back in his chair. "Great Samson! If there's one thing I hate more than another, it's swank. I can't stick a fellow who boasts that he can do this and that, and when everybody knows jolly well that he can't do any of them!"

"In that case you can't stick yourself!" said Bell, with an unpleasant grin. "Why, only last week I saw a fellow on a motor-bike—on the films, of course—take a flying leap right across a ravine. Absolutely hair-raising, it was."

Travers shrugged his shoulders.

"These things look good on the films; but there's nothing in them, really," he said contemptuously.

"It's easy to say that—when you know jolly well that there isn't a ravine you could leap over!" said Gulliver, with a chuckle.

"But there *is*!" said Bell coolly.

"What?" shouted Travers.

"Absolutely!" said Bell. "Over by the old quarry. You know, Gully!" he added, turning to Gulliver. "About half-way along the quarry, where there's a sheer precipice.

Don't you remember that ravine that comes right in? It's about eight feet across where it splits into the moor. There's a footpath along the edge, too, but the footpath makes a detour near that ravine, although there's no fence or protection of any kind."

"By gad, yes!" said Gulliver eagerly. "That's right! Why, if Travers came along that footpath on his motor-bike, and kept straight instead of making the detour, he'd have to leap right across that eight-foot gap, wouldn't he?"

"Of course he would," grinned Bell. "Well, Travers, what about it? Here's your chance! There's the very thing that was done on the films—ravine and everything, all complete! I dare you to do it!"

"So do I!" said Gulliver gleefully.

They confidently felt that they had Travers on toast. He had only been boasting, and he wouldn't dare to accept this challenge. But Vivian Travers merely leaned back in his chair and gazed dreamily at the ceiling.

"An eight-foot gap!" he murmured. "A footpath running along the edge of the cliff. Well, well! Very pretty—very inviting! And you fellows have dared me!" he added, looking across at Gulliver and Bell. "Of course, it's settled!"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"It's settled!" said Travers, as he stirred his tea. "We'll get up early to-morrow morning, and I'll do it before breakfast!"



CHAPTER 8.

Jimmy Doesn't Like It!

THE expressions on the faces of Gulliver and Bell abruptly changed. They gazed at Vivian Travers in

astonishment and wonder.

"You—you don't mean it?" said Gulliver, at last.

"Mean it? Of course I mean it!" said Travers. "You've dared me, and that's enough!"

"But, hang it, I didn't mean——" began Bell.

"Whether you meant it or not makes no difference," interrupted Travers. "A dare is a dare, and you'll be sneering all over the school if I took advantage of a loophole to slip out of it. No, dear old fellows. We'll be up early to-morrow morning, and you two fellows will witness this Leap of Death."

"But—but I was only joking!" stammered Bell, looking frightened. "At least, I—I didn't exactly think that you'd——"

"You didn't think I'd take the dare, eh?" said Travers coolly. "Well I have. It's settled, Bell. Say no more about it."

"But you might be killed!" panted Gulliver.

"We've only got to die once," said Travers easily.

"You—you silly ass!" shouted Gulliver, getting to his feet. "I shall tell the House-master——"

"If you do I'll punch your head until it's a jelly!" said Travers grimly. "Besides, the House-master couldn't stop me even if he wanted to. I can ride my motor-bike where I like—as long as it's outside the school grounds. You don't suppose the House-master will set a watch on that footpath, do you?"

"Yes, but—but that ravine is about eight feet across—it's a sheer gap!" said Bell nervously. "And the footpath is only two or three yards away from the edge of the cliff."

"All the better!" said Travers. "It'll make it more exciting."

"Oh, but look here——"

"Dry up—both of you!" snapped Travers, changing his tone. "I'm fed up with it. You've dared me, and I've accepted. I shall be up at a quarter-past seven in the morning, and I'll lug you two fellows out, too. We'll be at the appointed spot at eight o'clock sharp."

Although Gulliver and Bell wanted to continue the discussion, Vivian Travers would not let them. So far as he was concerned, the subject was closed.

Later, Travers happened to run into Jimmy Potts in the lobby. The boot-boy baronet was looking very smart in his well-cut uniform. He was cheerful, too, for he was finding life at St. Frank's much more enjoyable than he had dared to hope for.

"Just a word in your private ear, Jimmy, dear old fellow," murmured Travers, as he took Potts by the shoulder. "Do you want to see something exciting?"

"I've seen enough, thanks!" said Jimmy gruffly. "You might have killed yourself this afternoon, sir!"

"Don't call me sir!"

"But I must—here, in the lobby!" whispered Jimmy. "Walls have ears, don't forget!"

"Oh, well—just as you like," said Travers. "Well, look here—if you can get half an hour off in the morning, at eight o'clock, run over to the moor quarry. I don't exactly know where it is, but anybody will tell you. Gulliver and Bell are going to guide me there in the morning."

"But what for?" asked Jimmy, staring.

"What are you going to do, sir?"

"A hair-raising stunt on my jigger!" said Travers coolly. "The Leap of Death! Sounds blood-curdling, doesn't it? There's a kind of ravine there which dips in from the edge of the cliff. I'm going to ride right across it on my motor-bike and risk my innocent young life!"

"You're mad!" said Jimmy Potts.

"So I've been told before," nodded Travers. "But there are all kinds of madness, you know, Jimmy. Fellows have won the V.C. for going mad. But, of course, I'm ready to admit that this stunt is absolutely useless—merely a new form of amusement."

(Continued on page 14.)

"HANDS UP — YOU 'UNS!"

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Besides, I've been dared, and there's no getting out of it."

"Well, I don't like it, sir," said Jimmy Potts earnestly. "I wish you'd give it up. Anything might go wrong just at the critical moment. And what if you get killed?"

"That's just the point," laughed Travers. "There's not an earthly chance of my getting killed. I know I can do it—so I shall do it. Confidence is everything. A fellow who has confidence in himself can accomplish wonders. Superhuman tasks become simple pleasures. In other words, Jimmy, dear old fellow, confidence and determination are the twin brothers of success. They always work together, and they always get there!"

And Vivian Travers, with a nod, strolled on. Jimmy stood for some few moments, thinking. He knew what a reckless beggar Travers was, and he knew that he was determined, too. Nothing would shake him from this purpose. He was going to risk his life over that ravine—just to show Gulliver and Bell that the thing could be done. It was foolhardy—it was crazy. But to argue with Vivian Travers would be a waste of time.

It was impossible for Jimmy to think any further on the subject, for at that moment Grayson, of the Fifth, came walking into the Ancient House. Grayson's eyes lighted up as he caught sight of the buttoned boot-boy.

"Why, the very fellow I was looking for!" said the bully of the Fifth, with an unpleasant grin. "I want you, Potts!"

Jimmy looked up sharply, and his eyes were grim.

"What do you want me for, sir?" he asked, controlling himself with difficulty. "I'm the boot-boy of the Ancient House, not the East House!"

"That doesn't make any difference to me," said Grayson harshly.

"But you have your own boot-boy over there, sir—"

"Don't argue with me, kid!" said Grayson unpleasantly. "When I say I want you, you've got to come! Understand? Come outside—now!"

Jimmy Potts seemed to swallow something.

"I'm wanted by Mrs. Poulter, sir," he said.

"Hang Mrs. Poulter!" snapped Grayson. "If you don't obey my orders, I'll— Well, you know what I'll do!"

"Very well, sir!" said Jimmy, his tone singularly flat. "I'll come!"

Harold Grayson's eyes glittered with amusement and triumph.

"Well?" he muttered. "What is it you want?"

"Say 'sir' when you speak to me, you—you low menial!" snapped Grayson.

"I may be in a menial position—but you know well enough who I really am!" said Potts fiercely. "And I'm not going to call you 'sir' when we're alone, Grayson. You of all fellows! What do you want, I say?"

"You confounded young pauper!" sneered Grayson. "Use a different tone when you speak to me! Unless you obey my orders without question, I'll let everybody in the school know who you really are! I'll let them know that you're Sir James Potts, and that your mother has accepted a job as housekeeper at the girls' school, up the road!"

"Well, there's nothing degrading in that, is there?" asked Jimmy hotly.

"Well, it's a bit of a come down, isn't it?" jeered the Fifth-Former. "Still, you needn't worry, Potts. Your secret is quite safe with me—as long as you obey my orders!"

Jimmy Potts breathed hard. He clenched his fists, and strove with all his strength to keep them by his sides. More than anything else, he wanted to smash into Grayson and to knock him down.

For this was the supreme humiliation!

Vivian Travers knew that innocent secret—but Travers was perfectly willing to keep it. Grayson was in a totally different category. For it was Grayson's father—Mr. Mortimer Grayson, the stockbroker—who had brought ruin upon the Potts family.

There had been nothing illegal—nothing against the law. But Jimmy Potts knew—just the same as Travers knew—that Mr. Mortimer Grayson had taken a mean, contemptible advantage of a trusting client. Every farthing of the Potts' fortune had gone; every farthing of it had found its way into the Grayson coffers.

A legal transaction—but a moral theft.

The shock of it had killed Jimmy's father, and after that the crash had been even worse. For Jimmy and his mother had been left utterly penniless. Now, rather than live on their numerous friends—on their influential distant relatives—they had disappeared. As plain Mrs. Potts and Jimmy Potts they were earning their own living, and they were happier this way.

There was no disgrace in being poor—and still less disgrace in earning their own honest living.

"Look here," said Grayson, taking Jimmy by the arm. "you've got to go down to the White Harp for me—now."

"Is the White Harp a public-house?" asked Jimmy.

"You know it is!" snapped Grayson. "It's the first one you come to—"

"That low-down place," said the boot-boy. "Yes, I know it. But it might do me a lot of harm if I went in there, Grayson. Somebody might see me, and—"

"Rubbish!" interrupted the senior. "You're only a boot-boy! If any of the

CHAPTER 24

Running Errands for Grayson!



OUTSIDE, in the dark Triangle, Jimmy Potts had no necessity to control his expression. He looked miserable now—and he was fierce, too.

masters see you going in or coming out, they won't think anything."

Jimmy controlled himself with difficulty.

"Why do you want to expose me to this danger?" he asked fiercely.

"My dear kid, I don't want to expose you at all!" replied Grayson. "It's entirely up to you. Watch your time, and there'll be no danger. I can't go myself—because none of the scholars are allowed to go into pubs. It's a silly rule, but there it is. If it's risky for you, it's absolutely suicidal for me. Take this note and ask for Mr. Porlock. He's the landlord—and he'll understand. There'll be no answer."

Jimmy took the letter, and he was on the point of throwing it to the ground and refusing to go. Then he thought of his position at St. Frank's—he thought of the power that Harold Grayson had over him. One word from that bullying senior, and the whole school would know that he was Sir James Potts, Bart. No, it wasn't a disgrace—but the school authorities would certainly dismiss him. They couldn't have a boot-boy who was a baronet. Perhaps they would get him another job—but what would be the good of that? He wanted to be here—and he meant to be here.

"All right!" he said dully.

"Good man!" muttered Grayson. "Now don't forget! Take it straight down and give it to Mr. Porlock. If you don't do it, I shall get to hear about it later—and then I'll take it out of you!"

Grayson did not go into any details regarding the nature of the letter—but Jimmy Potts could easily guess. He had already heard that Jonas Porlock, of the White Harp, was a disreputable sort of rascal—that he was, indeed, a bookmaker's tout. Grayson was evidently having a flutter, and perhaps this note contained some money to put on one of the morrow's races.

Without a word, Jimmy turned on his heel and walked away. He went in the direction of the Ancient House, and Grayson looked after him.

"Hey!" called Grayson. "What are you going that way for? Haven't I given you your orders?"

"I want to give a message to the house-keeper, sir!" said Jimmy with a forced calm.

"All right—look sharp!" growled Grayson. "But I shall be out here—and if you're not out within five minutes, you know what to expect!"

It was another veiled threat, and within three minutes Jimmy Potts was outside again, and he strode out through the gateway without even looking for the lurking figure of Grayson. He went down to the village in a rebellious mood. For Jimmy was a sturdy, strong-willed junior. His whole nature revolted against this petty persecution. But what could he do? He was only the boot-boy—and Grayson was a senior.

Jimmy delivered the letter without any trouble, and, although he took every precaution when he left the disreputable public

house, it was just a trick of Fate that, as he came out through the lighted doorway of the inn, he should run clean into the headmaster himself.

Jimmy tried to slip off, but the Head's voice cut through the darkness of the evening.

"One moment, young man!" said Dr. Stafford sharply.

Potts came to a halt, his heart beating wildly. He was staggered at the amazing misfortune of this chance meeting.

It was just bad luck—sheer, downright bad luck!



CHAPTER 10

Travers Enjoys Himself I

R. MALCOLM STAFFORD

FORD was looking stern as Jimmy Potts faced him. Ninety times out of a hundred the Head came past the White Harp in his car. It was only by the merest fluke, in any case, that any master had happened to be walking by just as Jimmy had emerged.

"What is your name, boy?" asked the Head.

"Potts, sir."

"Ah, yes—I remember," said the Head. "I think you are employed in the Ancient House?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are a recent arrival," said the Head, nodding. "You have only been here, Potts, since the beginning of this term, I think?"

"That's all, sir," said Jimmy quietly.

"What were you doing in this—this inn?"

"Nothing, sir!" panted Jimmy. "I—I mean I was only just taking a message for—somebody. That is to say—"

"You need not be so flustered, Potts," interrupted the Head. "I am not going to press you for any details. I would only like to say that I strongly disapprove of any of the school employees visiting the White Harp. In certain circumstances, it may be perfectly in order—perfectly reasonable—for you to take a message to the George Tavern, or to one of the other inns. But the White Harp is well known as a disreputable resort."

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy, in a low voice.

"I thought I had better warn you about this, Potts," went on the Head. "Perhaps you did not know—or, at least, perhaps you did not realise the nature of your action. I shall say no more about it—but I must warn you that if anything like this happens again you will be instantly dismissed!"

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy, with an inward sigh of relief. "I—I'm awfully sorry, sir! I didn't want to go there of my own accord, sir—I was only taking a message—"

"I quite understand, Potts," said the Head kindly. "Your recommendations were very satisfactory, and I do not suppose for a

moment that you would personally find any pleasure in visiting the White Harp. So we will say no more about it. You are comfortable in your quarters in the Ancient House?"

"Yes, sir, thank you, sir—very comfortable."

"Good!" said the Head, patting Jimmy on the back. "Work well, my boy, and always do your best. That is the way to get on."

Dr. Stafford then continued his way to the village. He was really rather concerned, for it had struck him that Jimmy Potts was unusually refined, and he disliked seeing the boy frequenting a place with such a reputation as the White Harp. However, a word such as he had given would probably be all that was necessary, and so the Head dismissed Jimmy completely from his mind.

Jimmy, as he hurried back to St. Frank's, felt as though a great load had been taken off his mind. And yet, in another sense, he was more worried than ever.

For what guarantee had he that Grayson would not force him to go down to the White Harp in future? Perhaps Grayson would make him go again and again—and if he was seen by the Head, or by any of the other masters, it would mean the sack!

In this mood, Jimmy turned into the Triangle, and almost the first person he met was Vivian Travers. It was no chance meeting, either, since Travers had been waiting for him.

"Oh, here you are, dear old fellow," said Travers. "What's the trouble?"

"How did you know there was any trouble?" asked Jimmy.

"I'm not going to pretend to be clever," said the new boy in the Remove. "I spotted Grayson talking to you, and then I saw you go out. Two and two make four, Jimmy. Where did Grayson make you go?"

"To an inn called the White Harp—to take a message to the landlord."

"So that's his game, is it?" frowned Travers. "He's making you run his dirty errands for him!"

"But that's not the worst!" went on Jimmy. "The headmaster spotted me, and warned me that if ever I went into the White Harp again I should be dismissed!"

Travers whistled.

"That's bad!" he said, pursing his lips. "So Grayson has been laying you open to this sort of thing, eh? All right, Jimmy—all right! Don't worry your head about Grayson. I'll put a spoke in that gentleman's wheel!"

"But what are you going to do?" asked Jimmy, staring.

"Do? I don't quite know—yet," said Travers slowly. "But it'll be all right, dear old fellow. Just leave this to me. Well, well! So the campaign has started already, eh?"

"Campaign?" repeated Jimmy, in surprise. "What campaign? What do you mean, Travers?"

"Don't ask me!" laughed Vivian Travers. "Just a little affair between Grayson and me. A fancy of mine, Jimmy—a whim. I may proceed with it, or I may not. It all depends. But if ever Grayson comes to you again with his orders, bring them to me. I know you don't relish running to me with all your little trials and troubles, but this is rather different. And I want to grab the first opportunity I can to give Grayson what he deserves."

Travers refused to say anything more on the subject. He gave Jimmy a pat on the back, kissed his hand to him, and then strolled away indoors. He went straight to the Junior Common-room of the Ancient House; as he approached he could hear Handforth's voice raised above all the others.

"Rats!" Handforth was saying. "You can't kid me with a yarn like that, Long!"

"Don't believe him!" said Hubbard. "You know what a fibber Teddy Long is! Besides, he always gets things mixed up, and he exaggerates them, too."

"But it's not exaggerated!" shouted Teddy Long, the sneak of the Remove. "If you don't believe me, ask Travers! He's here now—he's just come in!"

"By jingo, you don't miss much, do you?" said De Valerie, turning round. "Just a minute, Travers!"

"As many as you like, dear old fellow," said Travers obligingly. "What's the trouble? If I can be of any help, just call upon me!"

"Some of the chaps are saying that you're going to do a death-defying stunt to-morrow morning, on your motor-bike," said Handforth, looking straight at Vivian Travers. "They say that you're going to leap across the ravine, over by the moor quarry. You've got to tell me that it's all a spoof!"

"I can't tell you that, dear old fellow, because it happens to be the truth!" said Travers calmly.



CHAPTER 11.

Handforth Decides!

EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH started.

"By George!" he ejaculated. "You—

you mean that you're really going to jump clean across that ravine on your motor-bike?"

"Yes," said Travers. "What about it?"

"You're mad, that's all—stark, raving mad!"

"Well, I can be mad if I like, can't I?" asked Travers. "I don't have to ask your permission, Handforth. Besides, there's nothing to make a fuss about. It's a perfectly easy stunt. Gulliver and Bell seem to think that it's a death-defying business, but that's all rot. As a matter of fact, I wanted



It was unfortunate for Jimmy Potts that, as he came out of the disreputable inn, he should run into Dr. Stafford. Jimmy tried to slip away, but it was no good. "One moment, young man!" said the Head sharply.

to keep it dark, but I forgot that they were born with loose-jointed tongues."

Nipper came forward.

"I don't want to interfere, Travers, but if you'll take my advice, you'll give up the whole foolhardy project," he said quietly. "If there was anything to be gained by it, I'd say—go ahead. But what do you get out of it?"

"A thrill, I hope," said Travers.

"A thrill, perhaps—with the possibility of breaking your neck," said Nipper.

"It is that possibility, dear old fellow, that makes it all the more exciting," smiled Travers. "What would be the good of doing it if there was a certainty of safety?"

"Oh, you're hopeless!" said Nipper. "It's your motor-bike, and you're master of your own actions, Travers, so I won't say any more—"

"Thanks awfully!"

"But if you've got any sense in that head of yours, you'll think better of this nonsense by the morning," added Nipper. "And I don't think the rest of you ought to encourage him by going along to watch the

proceedings!" he concluded, turning to the room.

But Nipper's advice was not heeded. Indeed, over half the Remove had already decided to get up early, so as to be on the spot at the appointed hour. They weren't going to miss a thrilling stunt of that kind!

Besides, the majority of them believed that Vivian Travers would get "cold feet" at the last moment, and then they would be able to have a good old laugh at his expense. This new fellow was altogether too sure of himself. He had too much cheek. The Remove would welcome an opportunity to take him down a peg or two.

"Yes, we're all going!" said Handforth firmly. "We'll be up just after seven, so that we can be over by the old quarry at eight o'clock."

"Who's going to call us?" asked Church dubiously.

"I'm not, for one!" said Nipper.

"Who cares?" said Handforth, with a wave of his hand. "All you chaps can rely upon me! I'll turn out at a quarter-past seven, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling asses!" roared Handforth, turning red. "Do you think I can't wake up at a quarter-past seven?"

"Easily—if somebody tips a pailful of cold water over your head!" grinned Fullwood.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All right—you wait and see!" snorted Handforth. "I'll be up at seven o'clock—and I'll tip a pailful of water over *your* head, Fully!"

"I shall sleep just as soundly!" grinned Ralph Leslie Fullwood.

But in the morning there was a slight change of programme. For six-thirty had hardly boomed out from the old school clock when Vivian Travers slipped out of his bed and went to the window. The morning was grey, for it was hardly full daylight yet. Massed clouds were scudding over the sky, and there was a high wind. But it was quite a dry morning, and Travers was satisfied.

He turned to the other two beds in the little dormitory, and shook Gulliver and Bell into wakefulness.

"Come on, lazybones!" said Travers briskly. "Time to get up!"

"It isn't half-past-seven yet!" said Gulliver, glancing out of the window.

"No—it's only a little after half-past-six," replied Travers.

"Why, you ass, what's the idea?" asked Bell, snuggling down into bed again. "We don't need to get up yet! You're not going to do this stunt until eight o'clock—"

"That's just a little mistake on your part, dear old fellow," said Travers. "The appointed time is now seven-thirty!"

"What the dickens do you mean?"

"Exactly what I say," replied Vivian Travers. "I don't see why I should satisfy the curiosity of these sensation-seekers. When they come along at eight o'clock, they'll find everything over. I only need two witnesses—with a possible third—and everything will be all serene. So I'm going to do that stunt at half-past-seven, and get it over before the crowd turns up!"

"Oh, I say, Travers!" protested Gulliver. "Why not give it up? Or, if you must go, why not go alone? You don't need us there!"

Travers went across to the washstand, and he lifted a jug of cold water.

"One—two—three—" he counted suggestively. "Four—five—"

"All right—we're out!" gasped Gulliver frantically.

Bell was on the floor, too. Travers chuckled to himself, and the matter was settled. Ten minutes later, the Study A trio sallied forth into the cold morning. The rest of the school was still sleeping soundly, and nobody was about, with the exception of a few members of the domestic staff.

Jimmy Potts, the Ancient House boot-boy, was included among these latter. He was busy at his job—cleaning boots for all be-

was worth in an outhouse. Rather to his surprise, he heard the voices of Travers & Co. in the distance. Hurrying to his door, Jimmy caught sight of the three Removites just vanishing into the bicycle shed.

Jimmy was puzzled for a moment or two—but then he jumped to the truth. It was just like Travers! Starting off half-an-hour before the appointed time!

Well, Jimmy wasn't going to be done. He calculated that it would take Travers some little time to inspect the "course," and that there would be a good few minutes wasted before the actual stunt took place. Jimmy Potts had a bicycle of his own, too—and he knew precisely where the moor quarry lay, also the footpath that led to it. He had been making inquiries since last night.

The way Jimmy went through the rest of those boots was a revelation!



CHAPTER 12.

Success—and Disaster!

VIVIAN TRAVERS inspected the scene of action with interest, and, after careful consideration,

he gave his verdict.

"Easy!" he declared.

"I wish you'd chuck it up!" said Gulliver uneasily. "It's all very well for you to talk, Travers, but you'll probably break your neck! Supposing you don't get to the other side! You'll crash right down into this ravine—right on to those rocks below! Supposing the engine fails at the critical moment?"

"Supposing you dry up?" asked Travers tartly.

"Yes, but—"

"If you didn't want me to do this stunt, you shouldn't have dared me," said Travers. "Oh, no! You can't withdraw that dare now. It's too late, dear old fellows. As they say in the classics, the die is cast."

"Well, if you smash yourself up—don't blame us!" said Bell. "Don't forget that we've tried to dissuade you, Travers! And if there's any inquiry, we shall tell the whole truth."

"That will be a novelty—for you!" said Vivian Travers coolly. "But I don't believe you, anyhow—for the simple reason that you don't know how to tell the truth. But why argue? It's nearly half-past-seven, and we'd better get on with the suicide."

There was plenty of reason for the uneasiness of Gulliver and Bell. Now that they came to look at this spot, they could easily appreciate its dangers. The three juniors were standing on the edge of the cliff, overlooking the old deserted quarry.

The cliff dropped sheer for several hundred feet, and there was a well-trodden footpath a few feet from the edge. Just at this

point a narrow gully split the cliff, penetrating for two or three dozen yards on to the moor. Near the cliff-edge, this miniature ravine was between ten and twelve feet across, although it dwindled to a mere crack further in. The footpath wended its way round the gully, making a long detour.

There were no fences or hedges, and a motor-cyclist, riding full speed along the footpath and keeping straight ahead, would inevitably go hurtling right over the top of that gully. If he failed to clear the gap, he would crash down to the rocky boulders below.

"It's all a matter of speed," said Travers. "If I don't come along fast enough, I shan't clear the gap, and down I shall go. I hope you fellows will pick my remains up, and sort them all out."

"Cheese it!" said Gulliver uneasily.

"We couldn't have found a better spot, even if we had searched half England!" went on Travers. "This edge of the gap is nearly two feet higher than the other side, and that will give me a good take-off. Even allowing for a slight drop, when I whizz into mid-air, I ought to land on the other side without any trouble. Anyhow, it's no good talking about it. Let's get it over!"

Vivian Travers was by far the coolest of the three juniors. Indeed, he had an amused expression on his face, and he seemed in no way perturbed by the prospect of what he was about to do. On the other hand, Gulliver and Bell were quaking with fright. They had no fears for their own safety, but they were certainly worried about the after-consequences, should Travers injure himself. Their minds reeled at the bare thought that he might possibly go to his death.

Gulliver and Bell could not forget that they had "dared" Travers to do this reckless deed. It was all very well to say that they withdrew the "dare," but among schoolboys it is a point of honour to go right ahead. Only the weaklings take advantage of such a withdrawal—and Vivian Travers was by no means a weakling.

Quite apart from this, he really seemed to be enjoying the whole business. He had confidence. One look at this place convinced him that he would be able to leap the gap without any difficulty. After that, perhaps, Gulliver and Bell would cease to sneer. Travers wanted to show them, once and for all, that he was complete master of his "jigger."

"Now, you two fellows stand well clear," he said. "Get back about a hundred yards, and watch the effect. Rather a pity you didn't bring a camera with you—to snap me in mid-air. Or it might be interesting to take a photo, after I've dropped down to the bottom of the precipice."

"You silly idiot!" said Bell frantically. Travers chuckled, and walked off towards his motor-cycle, which was resting on its stand some little way up the footpath. Two ordinary push bicycles were there, too, lying in the grass.

Travers took his machine off the stand, operated the kick-starter, and then drove off down the footpath for several hundred yards. When he was about a quarter of a mile away, he swerved round in a short circle, and prepared for the start.

There was no nonsense about Travers. He did not waste time on preliminaries. Opening the throttle, he came roaring along the footpath, changing rapidly into top gear. Then, bending low over the handle bars, and giving his engine every available atom of "juice," he sped on.

Gulliver and Bell stood there, well back, their hearts in their mouths. What was going to happen? Both of them were as pale as sheets as they watched.

Travers' motor-cycle was certainly a demon. It was coming along now at well over sixty miles an hour—a streak of red, hurtling along the footpath. And then—

Travers and the machine took off from the edge of the gap. Over they went—a clean, superb leap across space.

Thud!

The motor-cycle landed safely on the other side of the gap, and Gulliver gave a breathless gasp.

"He's done it!" he panted.

"Look!" shrieked Bell.

For the front wheel of Travers' motor-cycle had caught in a tiny, unseen rut—hidden in the grass. The machine wobbled, swerved, and then went straight for the edge of the precipice!

There was a moment of dreadful suspense, and then Vivian Travers and the red motor-cycle disappeared over the edge of the cliff!



CHAPTER 13.

In Deadly Danger!

RASH!

Both Gulliver and Bell heard that ominous sound. It came up to them after an appreciable pause—a long, dull crash—and they knew exactly what it meant. Travers' motor-cycle had struck the boulders, two or three hundred feet below!

"He's killed!" wailed Gulliver, nearly fainting with terror.

"We told him not to do it!" screamed Bell. "Didn't we, Gully? We told him not to do it!"

They were petrified with fear. They dared not go to the edge of the cliff and look over—and look down at the mangled, pitiful remains of that reckless Removite.

Even in their confused state of mind they could understand how the accident had happened.

Travers had cleared the gap all right, but owing to his front wheel getting into that unseen rut his balance had been upset. At such a terrific speed he had been unable to

correct the front-wheel wobble, and in a flash the machine had left the footpath, had swerved diagonally across the grassy stretch, and had careered over the cliff edge.

"What shall we do?" asked Bell, his voice absolutely cracking with horror.

"I—I don't know!" said Gulliver desperately. "But—but we'd better go and have a look, Bell. He may not be dead yet—and perhaps we can do something!"

"He must be dead!" said Bell. "It's hundreds of feet down there, Gully! And—and did you hear the crash?"

Gulliver did not answer, and they stood there, pitiful in their cowardice. In that momentary silence a hail came to them.

"Just a minute, dear old fellows!" it came. "A little help is worth a lot of pity, you know!"

"Travers!" yelled Gulliver and Bell in one voice. "He's alive!"

They raced towards the cliff edge like mad things, but they pulled themselves up short just before they got to the sheer edge. Then they went on their hands and knees, and peered over.

It seemed unbelievable—incredible. They had seen Travers go over the edge, and they had heard his motor-cycle crash far below on the boulders. There it was now—a wreck. But of Travers himself there was no sign!

"Where is he?" gasped Bell. "He's not there, Gully! Look at his machine—all smashed to scrap-iron! But Travers—"

"Oh, my goodness!" ejaculated Gulliver, with a catch in his voice. "Look! Look, Bell! There he is—there he is, just down the cliff face!"

And then George Bell saw.

About twenty feet down the face of the cliff, a little to the left of the two peering juniors, Vivian Travers was clinging desperately to some fragile-looking bushes. Only his face could be seen, and it was upturned towards them.

"Buck up!" he said, his voice perfectly calm. "Aren't you going to lend a hand?"

"How—how did you save yourself?" stammered Gulliver.

"Why ask foolish questions now?" said Vivian Travers. "There is absolutely nothing under my feet, and these twigs don't feel any too secure. Wouldn't it be a good idea to leave questions until afterwards?"

His coolness was amazing. Gulliver and Bell were nearly panic-stricken, and they were certainly helpless. For about twenty feet the cliff was not absolutely sheer—but nearly so. A few rocky projections jutted out, and here and there stunted-looking bushes were growing. Further beyond that twenty feet, the cliff became absolutely perpendicular.

And Vivian Travers was hanging over that void!

His escape from certain death was a miracle of luck. The motor-cycle had plunged over the edge, almost parallel with the cliff, and the machine, of course, had gone hurtling down to its destruction.

But Travers himself had just managed to claw at the cliff face as he had been swept

past it, and his clutching hands had grasped that frail bush. His downward plunge had been checked—and now he was clinging there, safe—but in the direst of peril.

For at any moment the bush might give way, precipitating the unfortunate junior down to his death. For him to help himself was impossible, for his legs were dangling, and he could obtain no foothold.

Moreover, he was afraid to struggle, lest his hand-grip should give way. Only by one hand was he holding, and he could feel the bush straining at its roots and threatening to give way with every second that passed.

His only hope was to hold still—to keep his head—and to wait for his companions to rescue him.

But Vivian Travers was likely to wait in vain! For Gulliver and Bell were too frightened to take any action. They were too cowardly to go to his assistance.

"We—we'll run for help!" panted Bell, as he stared down. "We'll rush away, Travers, and get ropes—"

"You'll never do it, dear old fellows," said Travers calmly. "I can only hold on here for two or three more minutes—and there aren't any ropes nearer than the school. You'll be half an hour before you can get back, and by then I shall be in the next world!"

"But—but we can't climb down to you!" shouted Gulliver desperately. "We should kill ourselves, Travers!"

"You cowards!"

Gulliver and Bell turned round, gasping. And there stood Jimmy Potts, the boot-boy!



CHAPTER 14.

At the Risk of His Life!

YOU cowards!"

Jimmy Potts repeated the condemnation, and his voice was vibrating with indignation. From a distance, Jimmy had seen Travers go over the edge, and his heart had leaped into his mouth. He had believed, in that dreadful moment, that Travers had gone to his death.

But now he knew differently—for he had overheard the words of Gulliver and Bell as he had come running silently up over the turf.

Flinging himself on his face, he stared downwards, and Travers smiled cheerily.

"Hallo, Jimmy!" he called. "Good man! You'll lend a hand, won't you?"

"Yes, sir!" shouted Jimmy, remembering his position, even in this trying moment. "You hold still, and I'll soon be down there."

Gulliver, his face flushing unhealthily, glared at the boot-boy baronet.

"Clear out of this!" he snarled. "Who the deuce do you think you are, coming here and

calling us cowards? Of all the confounded nerve—"

"At a time like this, we can't choose our words!" retorted Jimmy curtly. "I'm sorry, sir—but somebody has got to go to the help of Master Travers. I'm going!"

"Yes, but look here, you infernal sweep—"

"I'm going—now!" interrupted Jimmy fiercely, and there was something in his manner which made Gulliver and Bell cower away.

Jimmy Potts did not waste any time in wondering whether it would be safe to descend—or whether he would be taking his life into his hands. He just went at it—and never gave a thought to the risk. Action was required here—quick, decisive action. Travers was in danger of going to his death, and there were no ropes within miles. There was only one possibility. Somebody had to climb down—and that somebody was Jimmy.

Cautiously lowering himself over the cliff edge, he felt his way downwards inch by inch. Not until he had actually started did he realise, with something of a shock, that he, too, might probably go down to destruction. But the thought did not deter him.

For without help of some kind Travers was undoubtedly doomed.

How was it possible to stay up there, to watch him—to see his grip getting weaker—to see him release his clasp and go down to those cruel boulders? No, that sort of thing was impossible.

"Come back!" panted Bell, still pale to the lips. "Come back, Potts, you fool! There's no need for two of you to be killed!"

"Yes, come back!" shouted Gulliver savagely.

But Jimmy Potts took no notice. He continued to claw his way downwards, finding a niche for one foot here, and a niche for the other there. His fingers gripped the rocks, the twigs and the crevices.

Without pausing to think, he went down to the rescue of Vivian Travers.

And never once did Travers murmur a word of the truth. Slowly but surely that bush was being dragged out by the roots. But Travers did not say anything about this. He watched the loosening process with a fascinated gaze. He knew that if he said anything Jimmy would probably quicken his pace, and then he might go to his own death. It was better to be silent; and then, if Jimmy was too late—

"Listen, Master Travers!" came Jimmy's voice to the agonised junior. "As soon as my foot gets within reach of your hand, grab it. Give me a haul before you do so, so that I can hang on. Do you understand, sir?"

"Yes, yes!" panted Travers. "But are you sure you can hold me, Potts? I might pull you over, too!"

"We shall have to chance it, sir!" replied Jimmy steadily.

He went lower, and at the same moment the bush gave an ugly cracking sound. With horrified eyes Travers could see that it was

now rapidly losing its grip in the earth. And there was Jimmy's foot, only seven or eight inches away. Lower it came—it touched Travers' hand and clawed at a piece of rock.

"All right, I can do it!" breathed Travers.

"Hold still, Jimmy—for the love of Samson hold still! I'm going to grab!"

"I'm ready!" sang out Jimmy. He tensed himself. He gripped with all his strength, steeling himself for the coming ordeal. And then, with a gulp of horror, he felt a dead weight on his right leg, and he felt his hands slipping. With the desperation of despair he clutched harder, and he felt his fingers biting deeply into the face of the cliff, catching on to the rocks and holding.

"All serene!" came Travers' voice. "I've got you, old man—with both hands! How do we stand now?"

"Keep there—and hang tight!" replied Jimmy Potts, between his teeth. "I'm going to try to drag myself up inch by inch. Don't do anything, Master Travers, until you've got beyond the sheer edge."

But, although the boot-boy spoke cheerily, his heart was palpitating with stark fear. Somehow he did not fear for himself, but for Travers. So far, so good; but how far did it go?

Jimmy knew perfectly well that he could never drag himself to the top of the cliff. That dead weight clinging to him was fatal. As soon as he started to climb his grip would fail, and then the pair of them would go hurtling down!

Yet Jimmy Potts breathed no word of doubt.



CHAPTER 15.

In the Nick of Time!

"SOMETHING'S wrong!" said Handforth breathlessly.

"By Jove, I believe there is, too!"

said Fullwood. "Look at those two chaps there! Who are they?"

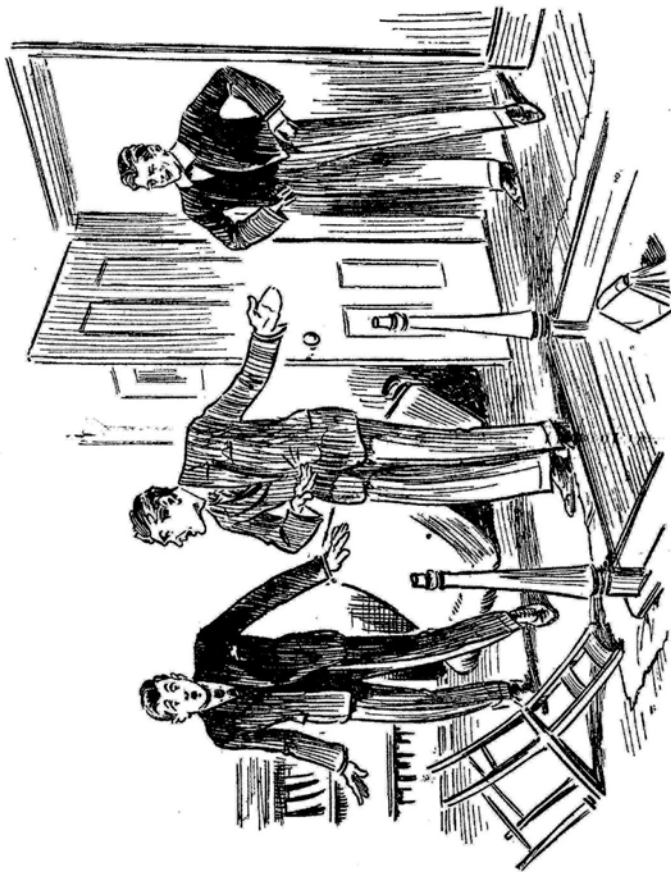
"Gulliver and Bell, I think!" said Handforth. "But where's Travers? Where's his bike? Great Scott, I believe he's gone over the edge of the cliff! Look at the way Gulliver and Bell are staring down!"

He let out a wild howl, and all the other juniors with him shouted at the top of their voices, too.

They had just arrived at the scene of action, having topped a rise of the grassy moor a moment or two earlier. They were on their bicycles, and they had been riding along from one of the moorland roads. It wasn't eight o'clock yet, and they had confidently believed that they would be in time for the demonstration. But it was clear to them now, at a glance, that something was wrong.

"Help—help!" came a screaming shout from Gulliver.

"There you are!" panted Church. "You



Grayson and Shaw gazed round the study in ascertained amazement. Everything was upside down—literally so. "I'll bet Pettis has done this —" yelled Grayson, then stopped as the voice of Vivian Travers—who was waiting in the doorway, smiling serenely—interrupted him. "Calm yourself, Grayson," Travers said.

were right, Handy! There's been an accident, I'll bet!"

"Come on!" yelled Handforth.

They pedalled for all they were worth, and just before they reached the cliff edge, they flung themselves from their machines and raced on foot.

Handforth, reckless as ever, went right to the edge of the cliff and leaned over. But Church and McClure were at his rear, holding him back.

"Oh, my only hat!" ejaculated Handforth. "It's Travers down there—yes, and Potts; the boot-boy, too!"

"Have you got any straps or ropes?" asked Potts, his face strained and haggard. "We can't hold much longer, Master Handforth. I thought I could bring him up, but—"

"There aren't any ropes, but we can easily make a human ladder!" shouted Handforth. "Come on, you chaps, I'll go over the edge of the cliff. Somebody grab my legs!"

He wormed his way over the cliff face before anybody could stop him, and Church and McClure grabbed desperately at his legs. Church and McClure went down flat, too, and some of the other juniors seized them in turn.

In next to no time Handforth was sprawling head downwards over the abyss, and his hands came within reach of Jimmy Potts. He gasped, took a firm hold, and grinned with triumph.

"All right, Potts!" he said breathlessly. "You're safe now! Put all your weight on me—"

"But there's Master Travers' weight, too, sir," gulped Jimmy.

"That's all right—we're ready for it!" said Handforth. "Hold still, you fellows up there! Get ready for the pull!"

"Go ahead!" came the steady voice of Fullwood.

With a choking cry of relief, Jimmy Potts allowed his full weight to rest upon Handforth's arms. After that the thing was comparatively easy. Foot by foot the two clinging juniors were pulled up, and at last they came sprawling over the edge of the cliff, and all danger was over.

"Oh, thank Heaven!" breathed Gulliver. "You fellows arrived just in time! You've saved Travers' life—"

"Pardon me, Gulliver—pardon me!" said Vivian Travers coolly. "It was Jimmy Potts who saved my life!"

"Rats!" said Gulliver, scowling. "That menial kid would have gone over himself if the others hadn't come up—"

"Jimmy Potts is a pal of mine!" said

Travers, giving Gulliver a straight look. "He may be a menial, but he's saved my life. If it hadn't been for him, I should have been dead by now. That tree branch was giving way every second, and Potts arrived in the very nick of time. And, by gad, I believe he could have clawed his way to the top without any help, too! I'm glad the help came, and so is he—but facts are facts."

"It was nothing," muttered Jimmy uncomfortably. "Please don't talk about it, sir! You were in danger, and—and—"

"And these funks wouldn't help, eh?" said Travers, indicating Gulliver and Bell. "Well, it's over now. Let's forget it."



Grayson and Shaw gazed round the study in angered amazement, yelled Grayson, then stopped as the voice of Vivian Travers—hisself, (

"Forget it!" roared Handforth indignantly.

"By the way, you were fine, dear old fellow!" said Travers, clasping Handforth affectionately. "Thanks awfully!"

"Don't be an ass!" frowned Handforth. "It seems to me that you were right about Jimmy Potts. He's the chap who's done all the heroic stuff! But it's like your nerve to tell us to forget it!"

"Yes, what about your jigger, Travers?"

asked Fullwood. "It's smashed to bits!"

"Scrap iron!" nodded Travers. "But never mind! My pater will send me a new one—an exact replica of this—next week. I'll just tell him I've had a bit of a bust up, and he'll give an order for a new machine."



upside down—literally so. "I'll bet Potts has done this —" he doorward, smiling serenely—interrupted him. "Calm your-

"It's nice to have a pater like that!" said Church enviously.

"This is what comes of playing the fool!" said Handforth sourly. "You tried to do an impossible stunt, Travers—"

"And I did it!" interrupted Travers. "I went right across the gap, as clean as a whistle. But my front wheel caught in a rut, or something, and I shot over the edge of the cliff."

"Well, you nearly lost your life through your folly, anyhow," said Fullwood.

"I agree!" nodded Travers. "It was folly! Sheer, unadulterated idiocy! I was a fool; I was an imbecile, and I nearly had to pay for my imbecility. Well? Any more remarks?"

"Well, hang it, since you admit everything so handsomely, there's not much to say," growled Handforth, looking disappointed. "I'm glad that you know that you were an ass, Travers!"

"Yes, we live and learn," said Vivian Travers, nodding. "Sometimes we think ourselves very clever—very smart. And then something comes along and gives us a much-needed jolt. We're compelled to see everything in the right focus. Just at present, I can see that I'm a blithering idiot, and the sooner we forget the whole incident, the better."

And the others agreed.

But Vivian Travers was not quite sincere in that remark. For he, at least, was never liable to forget his indebtedness to Jimmy Potts, the boot-boy!



CHAPTER 16.

Grayson At It Again!

AS Vivian Travers came out of the Ancient House, just after dinner that day, he paused. He frowned. He compressed his lips. For, over on the other side of the Triangle, he could see Harold Grayson, of the Fifth, talking with Potts, the boot-boy.

"I thought it wouldn't be long!" Travers muttered complacently. "Very well, Master Grayson! You're asking for it, so you'll get it! I'm going to play a pretty little game with you—a rather deep game—and it's going to be profoundly amusing, too!"

Since that dramatic episode of the early morning, Travers had been thinking deeply. He owed his life to Sir James Potts, and Vivian

Travers was rather overwhelmed by the enormity of that debt. Again and again he had told himself that he would have to do something to wipe it out.

And what an opportunity there was here—at his very finger-tips!

By a sort of mutual consent, none of the other juniors had spread the story of Travers' narrow escape. A rumour had gone round that Travers had accidentally allowed

his motor-cycle to go over the edge of the cliff, but the school did not know how narrowly Travers himself had escaped death. Even Handforth was holding his tongue—and that was remarkable in itself.

It was a half-holiday this afternoon, and Travers had been thinking about taking a run into Bannington. He had said very little to Gulliver and Bell that day. They were his study mates, and he had been thrown into their company quite a lot. But there was a distant air between them. Gulliver and Bell had not shown up in a good light that morning, and they were aware of their own insignificance. Travers treated them with open contempt, and they felt it.

On the other side of the Triangle, near the East House, Grayson was looking at Potts with an unpleasant leer on his face.

"They're my orders, Potts!" he said curtly. "See that they are carried out!"

"You're doing this deliberately, Grayson!" muttered Jimmy Potts fiercely. "You know very well that I've got work to do this afternoon. It may be a half-holiday for the school, but I'm only the boot-boy—the buttons! I haven't got the afternoon off."

"And if you neglect your own duties, and spend your time working for me, you'll get into a row, eh?" said Grayson. "Well, what the dickens do I care? Of course I'm doing it deliberately! I've got you on toast, young Potts! Either you do as I order, or you'll be sorry for yourself!"

"Yes, but—"

"I don't want any objections!" snapped Grayson. "I'm going out this afternoon, and you've got to clean up my study. Understand? When I come back, I shall expect that study to be as tidy as a new pin—absolutely spotless! If it isn't, out comes the truth!"

Grayson walked off, without allowing Jimmy Potts to say another word, and there had been something in his tone which told Jimmy that he had meant what he said. The bully of the Fifth was taking full advantage of that knowledge of his!

"Trouble, dear old fellow?" asked Vivian Travers, strolling up.

Jimmy turned, his eyes glowing with resentment.

"Yes!" he muttered. "It's Grayson again!"

"I thought so," nodded Travers. "What is it this time?"

"He's given me orders to clean out his study!" said Jimmy fiercely. "It's not my work, Travers! I haven't the time, either!

I've got to help Mrs. Poulter this afternoon—and she'll report me if I fail to turn up. That might mean an inquiry—and dismissal."

"Don't worry yourself, dear old fellow," said Travers. "Leave this to me."

"But how can you do anything?" asked Jimmy.

"Just give my brain a few minutes to get going, and it will evolve a ripe scheme," said Travers. "Grayson wants his study turned out, doesn't he? When he comes back, he wants to find it spotless, eh? All right, Jimmy! He will find it spotless. In fact, I'll undertake to do the work. You buzz off into your own House, and get busy on your usual duties."

"Yes, but you can't clean out that study!" said Jimmy, staring. "You, least of all fellows, Travers! I've never known you to do any work in your life! Even at Beccleston, you let all the other fellows wash up, and—"

"I know!" interrupted Travers sadly. "Laziness was always one of my weaknesses. But there are times, Jimmy, when I surprise even myself. It may sound incredible, but this afternoon I am going to work!"

Travers would not allow the boot-boy baronet to say another word. He "shoo-ed" Jimmy away, and made him go into the Ancient House, where he really belonged. Then Travers stuck his hands deep into his trousers pockets, and he noticed that Handforth & Co., Nipper, Fullwood, Reggie Pitt and a few other Remove fellows were bearing down upon him. He awaited their arrival calmly.

"If you want me for football this afternoon, dear old fellows, there's nothing doing," he said, before any of them could speak. "I'm engaged."

"We weren't going to talk about football, Travers," said Fullwood. "We were wondering why you were standing there, talking so familiarly with Potts. Anyone would think you two were great friends, whereas he is almost a complete stranger to you."

"Is there any rule which prohibits me from talking with Potts?" asked Travers politely, evading replying to Fullwood's last sentence. "He saved my life this morning."

"Yes, I heard about that," said Nipper. "Good fellow! He's got the right spirit in him—the real, genuine pluck! As for you being familiar with him, Travers—well, that's your own concern."

"Thanks awfully," said Travers. "As a matter of fact, I believe in being familiar with everybody. I'm glad you've come, all of you, because I've got something to put before you. There's work to be done this afternoon."

The juniors looked at Travers inquiringly.

"Work?" repeated Church, staring. "For us?"

"Yes—for us!" said Vivian Travers. "To put it briefly, we're all going to clear out Grayson's study!"

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CHAPTER 17.

Cleaning Up Grayson's Study!

NIPPER grinned. "Oh, so we're going to clean up Grayson's study, are we?" he said pleasantly.

"That's a piece of news, Travers! What's the idea, you ass? Explain yourself!"

"Yes, choke it up!" said Handforth. "By George! Grayson is the last fellow in the world I'd help! He's a rotten bully, and he's a blackguard, too!"

"I agree with you," said Travers. "Well, in a nutshell, Grayson has just been ordering Potts—our boot-boy, mark you—to clean his study out this afternoon!"

"Nerve!" said Fullwood indignantly.

"It would be serious enough if Grayson ordered his own boot-boy to do such work," said Travers. "But our boot-boy! Our boot-boy, you fellows—our own little Jimmy! He, and he alone, has been ordered to do this scavenging!"

"Well, it's like Grayson's nerve!" said Nipper, frowning. "Of all the impudence! Giving orders to the Ancient House boot-boy!"

"I've just told Potts to take no notice of it," said Travers, nodding.

"I should think so!" roared Handforth. "If you hadn't told him——"

"Just a minute, dear old fellow," interrupted Travers. "You see, the problem is a little difficult. If Grayson comes back and finds that his study isn't cleaned up, he's liable to take it out of Pott's hide. It's all very well for us to say that we shall protect him—but Grayson will find all sorts of opportunities for grabbing the poor kid. So what do you say to the idea of us cleaning out the study?"

"Dotty!" said Handforth promptly.

"Rotten!" said Nipper.

"Worst idea under the sun!" contributed somebody else.

"Well, that's a pity," said Travers thoughtfully. "I had rather an idea that we could do the job well."

Vivian Travers proceeded to add a few embellishments. As he proceeded, his listeners smiled, and then grinned. Even Handforth found himself roaring with laughter at the end—Handforth, who rather had a habit of decrying the ideas of other people.

"It won't take us more than ten minutes, if we all work hard," said Travers. "Well, you fellows, are you game?"

"Rather!" grinned Church. "Come on—let's get it over!"

"Hear, hear!"

"And it'll serve Grayson right—for his

giddy nerve!" said Handforth gruffly. "The trouble is, this scheme isn't strong enough, Travers. We want to do something more ambitious."

"Rats!" said Nipper. "I don't believe in doing any real harm in a fellow's study—even though he is a rotter."

After a little argument they all went into the East House, and before long they were within Harold Grayson's study, in the Fifth Form passage. As it was fine that afternoon, hardly any of the fellows were indoors. So the juniors had the place to themselves.

The work was a little more difficult than they had believed, and a full half hour had elapsed before they emerged into the Triangle once more—dusty, but satisfied. They dispersed, and Travers refused all offers to go to the playing fields.

"No, dear old fellows, I'll hang about here, if you don't mind," he said. "I rather want to see Grayson's face when he comes in. There's no need for everybody to wait, of course—he may be an hour or two yet. But I have a good stock of patience."

"Well, you can stay here if you like—but we're going," said Handforth.

"Thanks awfully," muttered Vivian Travers.

His vigil was not so wearisome as he had feared. For, less than three-quarters of an hour later, Grayson came striding across the Triangle from the main gates. He was accompanied by Kenmore, of the Sixth, and Shaw, of the Fifth. Shaw was Grayson's study mate, and he was nearly as big a rascal as Grayson himself.

Kenmore parted from them, and went off towards the Modern House; Grayson and Shaw came up the East House steps, and strode through the lobby. They took no notice of Travers whatever. But Travers turned, and leisurely followed them into the Fifth Form passage.

"We're back a bit too soon, aren't we?" Shaw was saying. "I expect we shall find that beastly boot-boy in the study. It was a dotty idea of yours, Grayson, to order him to clean it up. He's not our boot-boy, anyhow, and——"

"Never mind about that," interrupted Grayson. "I've scared the kid out of his wits. He obeys everything I tell him! Besides," he added, "I thought perhaps we could play a little Banker before tea!"

He opened the door of his study, and strode in. But he only took about one step into that apartment. Then he paused, and his mouth opened wide. His eyes bulged from his head.

"By gad!" he gasped, at length.

"What's the matter?" demanded Shaw impatiently. "What are you standing there for, you idiot?"

"Look at this!" roared Grayson violently. Frederick Shaw went into the study—and then he understood exactly why Grayson had become so excited!



CHAPTER 18.

Upside Down!

RAYSON'S study was upside down.

That is to say, the contents of Grayson's study were upside

down. Not in the ordinary, accepted meaning of the phrase—but literally so. That apartment bore an extraordinary aspect!

Everything was spotlessly clean, just as Grayson had ordered. But the carpet was showing its reverse side to the world—even the linoleum border was upside down, too. The table was upside down, and the chairs were similarly placed. The bookcase—the bureau—the easy chair—the fender—the pictures on the walls—the curtains at the windows—everything!

Every object in that room, big and small, was upside down!

"Well, I'm hanged!" said Shaw thickly.

"Who—who's done this?" yelled Grayson. "Potts, I'll bet! The young hound! I told him to come here and——"

"Calm yourself, Grayson!" said Vivian Travers, from the doorway.

Grayson swung round, and he glared at Travers.

"What are you doing here, you confounded Remove idiot?" he demanded. "You're a new kid in the school, aren't you?"

"Not exactly now," said Travers. "Rather second-hand, in fact——"

"Don't be funny with me!" roared Grayson.

"I will admit that it is unnecessary to be funny with you, Grayson," said Travers coolly. "You are quite funny enough without my assistance."

"Look here——"

"As for this room, you can hold me responsible," went on Travers. "I did this."

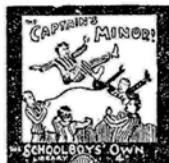
"You!" shouted Grayson.

"I, said the sparrow, with my bow and arrow!" nodded Travers.

"You cheeky, infernal, blithering——"

"Don't rack your brains for any more grammatical terms, dear old fellow," said Travers. "I am ready to admit that a

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number of other fellows helped me to carry out the idea. But I am responsible. Rather neat, isn't it?"

"Neat!" howled Grayson. "I'll tan the life out of you for this!"

"Well, of course, that depends," said Travers. "I might object, Grayson. In fact, I do object. You see, you told our boot-boy to clean your study out, and quite a number of Ancient House fellows objected to the scheme. So I suggested that we should turn your study upside down, after thoroughly cleaning it, and this is the result. One of the smartest jobs I've ever seen."

"Shut that door!" snarled Grayson. "That's right, Shaw! Shut it—and lock it! Where's my Malacca? I'm going to tan this kid until——"

"Now, don't get so excited!" said Travers indulgently. "Excitement is never good for you, Grayson. It was only a joke, after all. Can't you take a joke?"

"I'll soon show you whether I regard this as a joke!" roared Grayson savagely.

"It's rather a pity that you're so violent," said Travers, with regret. "I'm not an eavesdropper by nature, but I happened to hear a few remarks concerning Banker. And Banker is my one weakness. I was looking forward to a little game with you."

Travers thoughtfully pulled a hand from his trousers pocket, revealing about thirty shillings worth of silver, and a whole bundle of currency notes.

The effect upon Grayson was immediate. He regarded that money with a sudden, cunning gleam in his eye. It so happened that Grayson was rather short, and Shaw was flush. Grayson had suggested Banker because he felt that he would be able to get some of Shaw's cash. Unfortunately, he and Shaw knew one another—they knew their own little tricks, and Grayson had felt, all along, that he would not get much change out of his disreputable study mate.

But here was a Removite—a mere kid—a new fellow into the bargain! Here he was, asking for a game of Banker, and he was displaying a sum of money that could not be less than ten or twelve pounds! Harold Grayson could easily afford to forget the "joke" that had been played upon him.

"Of course, if you won't admit me into the game, I shall have to suffer the dread penalty of solitude," said Travers. "Unfortunately, there aren't any fellows in the Remove—well hardly any—who can play Banker properly. Gulliver and Bell are likely candidates, I will admit. But they are both broke, and I am inclined to favour high stakes. Five shillings a bet is my usual."

"By gad!" said Grayson blankly.

Travers turned to the door.

"Well, I'll be going," he said, putting his money back. "I shouldn't advise you to use your Malacca, Grayson. It'll only create a noise, and——"

"Just a minute!" growled the bully of the Fifth. "I didn't mean that just now, Travers. Your name is Travers, isn't it?"

"Vivian Travers—at your service!" nodded the new boy.

"Well, I don't want to quarrel with you," said Grayson. "As it was only a joke, I'll forget all about it. You're welcome to a game, if you like."

"That's fine!" said Travers, beaming. "In about twenty minutes, say?"

"Why twenty minutes?"

"I want to give you two fellows time to straighten out the study," said Travers coolly. "All right, I'll be back within twenty minutes."

He opened the door, and strolled out. Grayson and Shaw looked at one another, and had nothing to say. Vivian Travers was ready enough to join them in a game of Banker—but he certainly was not going to help them to straighten that study!



CHAPTER 19.

His Real Character!

AT five o'clock, Vivian Travers rose to his feet.

"I'd like to stay longer, dear old fellows, but I arranged to have tea in the Ancient House," he said regretfully. "We've had quite a nice game, and we're all friendly. What could be better?"

"You're quite welcome to stay if you like," said Grayson. "Why not have tea here? We could continue the game."

"Thanks all the same, but an hour of Banker is enough for me at one sitting," replied Travers. "I must have lost a few bob, too. Well, what does it matter? The game's worth it. Before now, I've lost seven or eight quid at a sitting. Who cares? It's all in the game!"

He was smiling and cheerful, and Harold Grayson was particularly delighted—because, at that moment, he had twenty-five shillings of Travers' money in his pocket. The Removite seemed to think it was a mere trifle, but Grayson was by no means averse to such trifles as these.

"Well, if you must go, you must," said the Fifth Former, at length. "But what about to-night?"

"To-night?" said Travers, as he moved towards the door.

"Yes!" said Grayson. "I told you that Shaw and I are going off after lights-out. There's a special spree on at the Wheatsheaf, at Bannington. Are you game to come with us?"

"I'm game for anything," said Travers promptly. "Splendid! We'll all go along to the Wheatsheaf and have a good time—after lights-out, eh? Well, well! What naughty tricks these boys will get up to!"

"I'll drop in later, Grayson, and we can fix up the details."

He strolled out, and Grayson frowned as the door closed.

"Cheeky young ass!" he said.

"Yes, he's got a nerve," agreed Shaw. "But I've won fifteen bob off him."

"He's got pots more money, too," added Grayson, his expression changing. "By gad! We'll properly rook him to-night. Shaw! A kid like that deserves to be parted from his money!"

Later on, Travers came back, and an appointment was arranged. What was more, that appointment was kept. Travers slipped out of the Ancient House after lights-out—after all the other fellows had gone off to sleep—and it was not until one o'clock in the morning that a shadowy figure came creeping upstairs.

In ordinary circumstances, Travers would have reached his dormitory without being spotted. But, by a curious piece of ill-luck, he ran right into Edward Oswald Handforth—of all fellows!

Handforth, as a matter of fact, had been to the bath-room to get some treacle off his feet. Some unknown joker had emptied a tin of treacle into the foot of Handforth's bed, and the leader of Study D had not discovered the tragedy until long after midnight—when he had ventured to put his feet down into the cold part of the bed. Until then, he had hunched his knees up, and the unknown joker had been rather disappointed. For no wild roars had come from Handforth's dormitory.

They came later on, however—as Church and McClure knew to their cost. After a lot of arguments, during which both Church and McClure had persistently refused to change beds with Handforth, the latter had gone off to the bath-room to wash his treacle feet. And now he was on the way back, burning with indignation, and bursting for revenge.

"Who's that?" demanded Handforth, as he caught sight of the dim figure.

"All right—don't shout," said Travers coolly. "It's only me!"

"Oh!" said Handforth darkly. "So you're the culprit, are you?"

"Who has told you this terrible thing?" asked Travers tragically. "Is it possible that I am undone?"

"You silly ass!" roared Handforth. "What do you mean by putting treacle in my bed?"

"Treacle in your bed?" said Travers, with a chuckle. "Not guilty, my lord! At the same time, I admit it's rather a brainy idea. Congratulations to the unknown genius!"

"You howling idiot!" shouted Handforth, exasperated. "My bed's in a terrible state now, and I shall have to sleep on the floor for the rest of the night!"

"We all have our troubles, dear old fellow," said Travers. "Sleeping on the floor, after all is a minor tragedy."

Two or three doors opened; many heads appeared and lights were switched on. Fullwood, Gresham, Nipper, Tregellis-West and several other Remove fellows came into the corridor.

"What's all the row about here?" asked Nipper. "Hallo, Travers! What on earth are you doing, fully dressed like that?"

"By George!" said Handforth, staring. "I hadn't noticed that before!"

Vivian Travers was in no way perturbed—although he had been caught red-handed.

"Have you been breaking bounds, you ass?" demanded Fullwood.

"I cannot tell a lie!" said Travers simply. "I have!"

"Oh, so that's the kind of chap you are, is it?" said Handforth, with contempt in his voice.

"Merely a brief, innocent flutter," said Travers apologetically. "A short visit to the Wheatsheaf, in Bannington. Surely there is nothing wrong with that?"

"We don't want to hear about your doings, Travers," said Nipper curtly. "If you like to be idiot enough to break bounds at night, and risk expulsion by going into public-houses, that's your affair! But we don't think much of you!"

Vivian Travers grinned.

"Well, as it happens, dear old fellow, I don't care a toss what any of you think of me," he said candidly. "As I have frequently remarked, I go my own road."

Travers went into his dormitory, leaving Handforth to explain his own treacle affairs to the others. And Travers was feeling in a good humour. For there was one concrete result from his illicit jaunt. Harold Grayson, of the Fifth, owed him five pounds.

And, somehow, Travers seemed to think that this was something extraordinarily good!



CHAPTER 20.

Going the Pace!

AFTER breakfast the next morning, Vivian Travers made a point of strolling in the Triangle. He wanted to have a word with Grayson—although he had no desire to seek Grayson out. An apparently accidental meeting would be much better.

Incidentally, Handforth was rampaging up and down the Ancient House, through the West House, and, in fact, all over the school, trying to find the miscreant who had put treacle into his bed over night. But, so far, Handforth had drawn blank. There was some hint that Willy, his minor, knew something about it—but this hint was not allowed to reach Edward Oswald's ears.

"Well, well!" said Travers genially. "So here we are, dear old fellow!"



Travers lifted the jug of cold water. "One—two—three—" he counted suggestively. "All right!" gasped Gulliver frantically, and he and Bell rolled hurriedly out of their beds.

Grayson had just walked out of the East House, and he frowned slightly as he caught sight of the Remove fellow.

"Morning, Travers!" he said bluntly.

"You don't appear to be in the sweetest of tempers, this morning, Grayson!" said Travers inquiringly.

"I had rotten luck last night!" growled the Fifth Former.

"You certainly did!" agreed Travers. "But don't let that prey on your mind; dear old fellow. And for the love of Samson, don't worry about that fiver. Any old time, you know."

Grayson frowned again. Things had certainly gone very awry last night. He had welcomed Vivian Travers' advent, because he had expected to take a lot of money from him. He had taken a little to begin with, but Travers had won it all back—and five pounds in addition to the cash that Grayson could hand out. Grayson hated being in debt, and to be in debt to a mere junior was humiliating.

"You'll get your fiver all right, Travers," he said unpleasantly. "I shall be able to pay you in cash on Saturday—"

"Why wait until Saturday?" asked Travers. "My dear old fellow, what about some revenge? Hang it, I don't want your money, I merely want a game so that you can wipe off the deficit. I like losing better than winning, really."

"That's why you win, I suppose," said Grayson cynically. "Well, you can come to my study if you like—"

"Isn't it your turn to be my guest?" asked Travers. "How about a little flutter to-night—after lights-out? In my dormitory, eh?"

"Over in the Ancient House?"

"Yes. Why not?"

"What about the fellows who share the dormitory with you?"

"Gulliver and Bell will be only too pleased to join in the revels," said Travers coolly. "Bring Shaw, and even Kenmore, if you like. He's a game bird, isn't he? I always like to fix these things up well in advance."

As a matter of fact, it was fixed up then and there, and that night, after lights-out, the party took place, according to plan.

Travers' bed-room, in the Ancient House, was the scene of much revelry.

The air was blue with smoke, and the window was closely shaded by two or three blankets—which had the effect of making the atmosphere more stuffy than ever.

One of the beds was used as a card table, and a motley crew sat round it. They were composed of Travers and Gulliver and Bell, of the Remove, Grayson and Shaw, of the Fifth, and Kenmore and Sinclair, of the Sixth. They were all birds of a feather—all rascals.

Vivian Travers seemed to be enjoying himself immensely. He was smoking harder than any of the others, and making heavier bets. He didn't seem to care how much he wagered—how much he lost, or how much he won.

It was all in the game to him—all a bit of sport. And because of this very indifference, perhaps, he consistently won. When it seemed that he must inevitably lose, the luck was in his favour, and he scooped in the pool.

All manner of games were tried, including banker, shilling-nap and even "pontoon." But Vivian Travers' luck never changed. As the hour grew later, so Grayson's face grew blacker. As Travers was enjoying the game, so Grayson was hating it. For he was losing heavily—and always to Travers. There was something uncanny about it—something almost mysterious.

It was well after midnight now, and far from Grayson having cleared off that five pound debt, he now owed Travers no less than seventeen pounds, five shillings!

Grayson was inclined to plunge heavily, in order to reduce the debt. In this form of insanity, Travers encouraged him. He kept on saying that Grayson's luck would be bound to turn sooner or later. Perhaps he would clear the debt in one fell swoop, if he only had the courage to keep on.

And Grayson did keep on—but his luck did not alter!



CHAPTER 21.

Mysterious Voices!

EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH sat up in bed, listening intently.

"Funny!" he said, frowning.

Was it his imagination, or did he hear a continuous rise and fall of conversation? An examination of his watch had told him that the time was eleven minutes past one, and it was most remarkable that voices should be audible at that hour. Now and again, too, a low laugh would sound.

Handforth did not quite know why he had awakened. As a rule, he slept like a top. Perhaps his wakefulness, to-night, had something to do with that treacle episode. Twice, after getting into bed, Handforth had positively declared that some practical joker had been playing another game on him. He had turned his bed inside out in order to find some imaginary lump, and there had been quite a row in the dormitory because Church and McClure had refused to help their leader to make the bed again.

Anyhow, Handforth was very disturbed to-night, and it was for this reason, perhaps, that he had awakened. He sat there, listening more intently than ever.

"There jolly well is somebody talking!" he told himself. "What's more, I'm going to investigate!"

He jumped out of bed, and his first act, naturally, was to arouse Church and McClure from their sleep. There was no

earthly reason why he should make them join in his investigation, but Handforth had no mercy.

"Come on, you chaps!" he said, in a low voice. "There's something rummy going on!"

"Well, what's it got to do with us?" demanded Church sleepily. "What's the time, anyhow?"

"Quarter-past-one," said Handforth. "I woke up just now, and I thought I could hear voices. We'll slip a few things on, and go out to find out what it means."

Church and McClure, from long experience, knew that it would be safer and speedier to agree. This was no time for lengthy arguments.

NEXT WEDNESDAY!



So they humoured Handforth, and slipped into a few of their clothes. It was better this way. They would go out, prove that Handforth had been imagining things, and then they would be able to get back to bed again. The whole thing would be over in five minutes.

But for once Church and McClure were wrong.

For when they got out in the corridor, they distinctly heard a murmur of voices—just as Handforth had done. They crept along, suspicions coming to them. When they reached the door of Vivian Travers' bed-room, they understood perfectly.

For the revellers within had grown so excited that they were no longer taking

care to keep their voices down to mere whispers. The game, perhaps, had reached an exciting point, and the gamblers had forgotten their caution.

"Hang you, I'll raise it ten shillings!" they heard Grayson say, in a savage voice.

"Go it!" came Travers' drawl. "That's the style, dear old fellow! Plunge on—you're bound to win!"

"Shut up!" growled Grayson.

"I'll see your ten bob!" came the voice of Kenmore, of the Sixth. "And here's another ten bob."

"What does it make now?" asked Travers. "Three-pound-ten in there? All right, I'll see the lot, and raise it—"

"By George!" breathed Handforth

"Three of us won't be enough! Let's go along and rouse Nipper and Watson, Fullwood, Gresham and Duncan and all the others. We'll make a proper affair of it!"

"Why waste time?"

"My dear chap, we shall get the worst of it if we barge in now!" said McClure. "And think what a chance this is! Kenmore is a prefect, and we shall have the opportunity of booting him! Think of that, Handy! Booting a prefect without any fear of the consequences!"

"By George!" said Handforth exultantly.

"You're right!"

It was, indeed, a golden opportunity. For they could kick Kenmore of the Sixth out, and Kenmore would not dare to raise an outcry. He would not dare to make any complaint afterwards. It was a chance in a thousand!

Five minutes later, nearly all the fellows in the Ancient House Remove were aroused. Nipper was grim about it.

"It's a jolly good thing you woke up, Handy!" he said. "So this is the kind of game that Travers is getting up to, is it? He may be a new fellow, but he'll have to understand that he can't invite those East House cads into our House!"

"Rather!" said Gresham indignantly. "Why, if anything of this came out, the House would be in disgrace!"

"Come on!" said Handforth aggressively. "Let's go in, drag them out by their hair, and pitch the whole crowd out-of-doors!"

The Removites moved relentlessly forward!

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thickly. "They're gambling in there—and for high stakes, too!"

"Travers' bed-room!" muttered Church. "I say, what a rotter! And we thought he had some decency in him, too! Just look at the way he plays football! He's a marvel in the forward line!"

"The chap's a blackguard, anyhow," said Handforth fiercely. "He's got all these smoky, gambling rotters in his bed-room. East House fellows, too! Are we going to allow it?"

"No fear!" said Church and McClure, in one voice.

But they pulled Handforth back as he was about to put his hand on the door-knob.

"Cheese it, Handy," whispered Church.



CHAPTER 22.

Playing His Own Game!

IMON KENMORE looked up with a startled expression on his flushed face.

"Who's that?" he

ejaculated, with a gulp.

A knock had sounded on the door, and all the revellers were looking scared. That knock had come unexpectedly—dramatically.

"It's all right—only me!" came the voice of Handforth.

"Well, well!" murmured Travers, grinning. "Dear old Handforth again! What a fellow he is for investigating!"

"What are we going to do?" muttered Grayson. "Confound Handforth! You know what an interfering beggar he is! If we don't let him in, he'll kick up a row!"

"Come on—open the door!" came Handforth's voice. "If you don't, I'll jolly well kick up a dust!"

"Better open it!" said Gulliver hastily. "There'll be the very dickens to pay if Nipper and the other fellows come crowding round!"

The door was locked, as Nipper had discovered when he silently tested it. But it was quickly unlocked now, for the rascals within believed that they only had Handforth to deal with, and they had already made signals to another—indicating that they would treat Handforth very drastically when he came in.

But this little plan was doomed to failure.

"Now then!" sang out Handforth, as soon as the door opened. "Pile in, you fellows!"

The fellows did pile in—over a dozen of them. They poured into the room like a stream, and Kenmore and Grayson and the others leapt to their feet, startled beyond measure.

"You rotter, Travers!" said Nipper, glaring at Vivian Travers. "I'll bet this is your doing! You invited these East House seniors here!"

"What of it?" asked Travers coolly. "It's my bed-room, isn't it?"

"Come on, Kenmore—you, too, Sinclair!" said Handforth exultantly. "I'd like to smash you on the nose, but we don't want to kick up too much noise. We don't want any disgrace. But, by George, I'm going to have the satisfaction of kicking you!"

"You young fool!" snarled Kenmore, backing away. "Don't forget that I'm a prefect!"

"You seem to have forgotten that you're a prefect," retorted Handforth curtly.

That sally went right home, and Kenmore could think of nothing to say. Not that he had any opportunity of saying much, for he was seized by many hands, and he was yanked out into the corridor. He was held securely, while other juniors, in the rear, booted him. It was quite a unique experience—to boot a prefect.

The worst of it was—from Kenmore's point of view—he couldn't raise any outcry. He had to submit, gnashing his teeth with helpless rage. Indeed, he was only too glad to get out of the Ancient House in safety, before any master came along to catch him in this uncompromising situation.

The others came along, too—Sinclair, Grayson and Shaw. They were all booted out—they were all given their marching orders by the indignant Removites.

After they had gone, Vivian Travers came in for some scathing remarks. He was held in contempt by all the decent fellows.

"You're a disgrace to the House, Travers!" said Nipper angrily. "It's bad enough to gamble in your own study and in your own bed-room, with your own pals, but when you invite these East House seniors here, it's nothing but a disgrace."

"We all have our own points of view," said Travers, yawning.

"And you'd better keep out of the football, in future!" said Handforth darkly.

"Why?" asked Travers, raising his eyebrows. "As long as my form is all right—as long as I play a good game—why should I be barred? Is that fair? Is that sporting?"

"Well, I didn't mean it, exactly," growled Handforth. "But you're a cad, all the same!"

"As it happens, I'm the football skipper, Handy," said Nipper quietly. "And as long as Travers plays a good game, he's welcome in the Eleven. What a man does in his own time is his own concern. But you'll soon crack up, Travers, if you keep up this pace!"

Travers shrugged carelessly. He was in no way perturbed by the grim expressions on the faces of the juniors surrounding him.

"Thank you for those kind words, dear old fellow!" he said coolly, addressing Nipper.

"Cut that out!" snapped the Junior skipper. "You ought to be thoroughly ashamed of yourself, Travers!"

"We'd better send him to coventry, and done with it!" said Church contemptuously.

"Hear, hear!"

And, by mutual consent, Vivian Travers was sent to coventry. He merely shrugged his shoulders. He didn't seem to care in the least.

Later on, after the juniors had gone, and after all the lights were extinguished, he lay in his bed chuckling. He was going his own road—and as for everybody else, they didn't worry him in the least.

For Vivian Travers was playing his own game.

"Twenty-three-pounds-sixteen!" he murmured. "That's the nice little sum that Grayson owes me. I've got I.O.U.'s for the whole amount—and Kenmore and Shaw and Sinclair know all about it. Gulliver and Bell, too! Plenty of witnesses!"

He chuckled hugely.

"Everything's going just as I planned it!" he told himself, with satisfaction. "In a very short time I shall have Grayson where I want him! And then——"

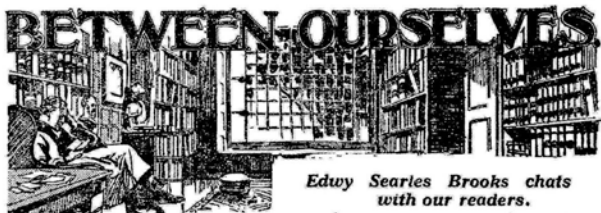
And then?

Vivian Travers gloated over the infinite possibilities that opened out. His schemes were working well. Little did Harold Grayson know exactly what this new fellow in the Remove was planning in that scheming mind of his!

And little did Jimmy Potts realise how Travers was designing to make some substantial return for that great service of his! Jimmy Potts had saved Travers' life—and Travers was grateful. In his own way, he was going to settle that debt!

THE END.

(The next yarn in this fine series is entitled: "THE VOICE OF THE TEMPTER!" and it tells how Travers schemes to get the rascally Grayson into a bigger mess than he's in already. Don't miss this magnificent story, boys!)



**Edwy Searles Brooks chats
with our readers.**

NOTE.—If any reader writes to me, I shall be pleased to comment upon such remarks as are likely to interest the majority. All letters should be addressed: EDWY SEARLES BROOKS c/o The Editor, THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, LONDON, E.C.4. Every letter will have my personal attention. Letters of very special merit will be distinguished by a star (*) against the sender's name. My photo exchange offer is still open; my autographed photo for yours—but yours first, please.—E.S.B.

HERE'S an idea which has just occurred to me. What about a regular weekly "How Much Do You Know About St. Frank's?" set of questions? These things are all the go nowadays, so why shouldn't we have one? We might start, perhaps, with a set of four questions every week. Then the answers could appear in the following week's number, in every case. Or, if that wouldn't give you enough time to puzzle out the answers for yourselves, the regular publication of the answers might commence four weeks after the first set of questions had appeared. I am wondering if a little feature like this would appeal to a majority, and should like your opinions about it.

The questions would, of course, be put to test your knowledge of the characters, places and facts of all kinds, which have been mentioned, at one time or another, in the St. Frank's stories—going back, in many instances, right to the very beginning, and I have an idea that puzzling out the answers would not only help to train your memories but also provide you with a novel sort of diversion, which would, at least, interest the many enthusiasts among you. At any rate, the authentic answers would, when published, be certain of a welcome from those innumerable readers, all over the world, who are continually bombarding me with queries about the personalities and localities and miscellaneous matters of all kinds which have been mentioned in the yarns at one time or another.

In fact, such a feature would probably anticipate a lot of your questions, and ease down the answers which I am continually giving you in a higgledy-piggledy way in these columns. Which is not to say that I've ever found it a bore. Don't run away with that idea. Why, delving into your letters, reading them through and through, and acknowledging and answering them, is

my biggest weekly treat. I just glory in sitting down to this little "Round Table" of ours and talking to you all. But that "Questions and Answers" feature, run separately, might provide a little variety, and be likely to be popular. Well, what have you all got to say about it?

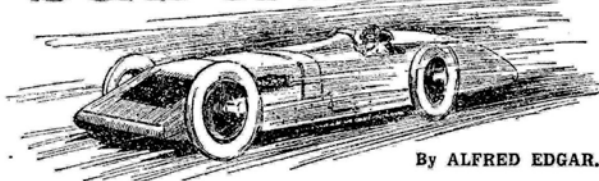
Of course, we shall have to have some sort of a title for it, if the scheme is adopted. In fact, we ought to have at least a temporary one now—for you to use when sending me your opinions. So, suppose we call it "The St. Frank's Questionnaire"? Anyhow, you shove that at the head of your paragraph about it, and I shall know at a glance exactly what you're getting at.

Winnie Stevens (Leytonstone), G. Fred Alderton (Portslade), "Akela" (Stockport), "A. W. D. Glenthorne" (Worthing), Ernest Crabtree (Goole), "Margaret" (Woodhouse Eaves, Loughborough), Reggie O'Shay (London, W.C.2), George Pearson (Hall), Cyril Harris (Darlington).

Your letter really deserves more than one star—Thomas Roberts* (Birmingham)—but I'm going to limit you to that to pay you out for writing to me in pencil! But you're setting a jolly fine example, Tom, and I felt real proud of you when I read this bit in your letter: "Every copy I buy I always give away. I take them all over the shop—all round Wilton, Aston, Loxells, a bit of Handsworth, and a bit of Hockley. I give my copies, after I have read them, to different chaps that live round about, and they buy it every week now." That's the style, Tom, old son. You're what I call a real loyalist. Keep it up, and you'll never be in danger of inclusion among the shirkers I spoke about. And as you've asked me in your postscript to excuse your writing in pencil, I'm blessed if I won't give you another star. Here it is—*.

WHEEL TO WHEEL!—They're only a quarter of a mile from the winning post and Dick and Lynch, with only yards separating their roaring machines, are fighting it out desperately. And young Dick's motto is win—or bust!

SONS OF SPEED!



By ALFRED EDGAR.

HOW THIS STORY STARTED:

DICK BARRY gets the chance to drive a Kent car in a great motor-race called the Targa Florio, in which his brother,

BIG BILL BARRY, crashes on a turn through the foul driving of his rival,

MARK LYNCH, star speedman for Ince Eight cars. The third machine in the Kent team cracks up, and it is left to cheery, iron-nerved Dick to try and win. Aided by his mechanic, Hurst, he drives magnificently and soon gains on Lynch. Dick is desperately anxious to beat the man, because Kent cars are deadly rivals to the Ince racers, both firms having built wonder-

ful, special machines with which they intend to try and break the world's record for the fastest land speed.

PROFESSOR KENT is the designer of the Kent record-smasher, which is called the Kent Flyer, while the rival monster car is known as the Giant Ince Eight. After being balked by Lynch in the Targa Florio, Dick sticks close behind the rival machine until the finishing line comes into sight, when he manages to pass. They are almost home, with victory in their grasp, when a front-wheel tyre on the Kent car bursts!

(Now read on.)

Dick's Desperate Effort!

SLIVERS of stripped rubber were streaking high from the burst tyre as, with all his strength, Dick forced the car straight.

Less than a quarter of a mile distant showed the flag-decked stand by the finishing line—and right at his tail was Mark Lynch, his roaring machine straining for speed as he strove to pass.

"Keep going!" Hurst reached up to bawl the words again in Dick's ear.

Dick gritted his teeth. It was a ten to one chance that, under the fierce speed, the now tyreless wheel would collapse if they kept on. If it gave, the car would turn turtle and smash itself to smoking wreckage beside the course.

Above the fierce roar of the car came a clattering noise. It was the wheel-rim pounding on the road! Dick could feel the car trying to pull over, fighting against him, heading for the death that lay at the side of the track—and, at his

elbow now, the radiator of the Ince Eight was prodding forward.

He forgot the risk and the chance of disaster in an effort to keep in front of his rival. He asked the lion-hearted engine for its last ounce of fierce power, and he kept in front.

From nose to tail the whole car was shuddering under the crashing impact of the flattened, bare wheel-rim on the road. Stands—horses—bunting—spectators—all merged for Dick to a blurred, misty vision. He could hear Hurst shouting something to him, but he couldn't make out what the little mechanic was saying.

He'd got to keep in front of Lynch—he'd got to win!

Again the car lurched, and again he pulled it straight, flogging strength into his tired muscles for the effort.

He made out the group of officials, one of them with the winner's flag uplifted. Through all the mad uproar of the two hurtling cars he could hear the booming of

the excited crowd. Never had the great race seen such a finish as this, and every man in the stand was yelling throatily for the gallant machine which was making so desperate an effort.

Hands quivering on the quaking wheel, teeth clenched painfully, Dick riveted his gaze on the chequered flag. It swept towards him. He bent over the wheel, willing still greater speed from the shuddering machine.

The flag whipped level, slashing down through the air as both cars hurtled across the finishing line.

Dick lifted a numbed foot off the accelerator pedal and reached for the brake pedal.

"Steady—easy with the brake!" Hurst yelled into his ear.

Dick saw Lynch shooting away ahead of him, then he trod on the pedal. He heard the piercing drone of the shoes in the brake-drums—and that additional strain finished the tyre-less wheel.

Even as they slowed, Dick felt the front of the car pitching over. The wheel collapsed in a tangle of broken spokes and riven metal. The tail of the machine swept round, dust and stones were gouged up by the remnants of the wheel.

He had a spinning, whirling vision of stands and spectators turning round and round him. He saw officials running as the car slithered across the road. He saw that the machine was sliding backwards into a fence, and he tried to drag the steering wheel over.

They hit the fence broadside on. Splintered wood sprayed up around them. The car tilted over, poised, then settled back as they came to a grinding halt in a cloud of smoke and dust.

The roaring of the engine died to silence as it stalled. With his stiff hands clamped on the steering wheel-rim, Dick turned to the grimy-faced Hurst and blinked at him through dusty goggles.

"Did we win?" he gasped.

"By a yard!" the mechanic replied.

The Victor's Reward!

DICK remained sitting in the car, staring blankly at the broken fencing. Out on the road he could see a great mark scored by the collapsed wheel on the surface, and in the dust lay one or two twisted spokes.

He could hear only a dull, hollow sound, because he was partially deafened by the thunder of his machine. But he could see spectators standing up in the grand-stand seats and waving madly. Along the side

of the track some officials were running, and the leader of the group was half-hidden by an enormous bouquet.

Then, from the other side of the track, appeared Big Bill. He ran across with one arm held stiffly over his broken rib, but on his sun-bronzed face was a grin which stretched almost to his ears. The big fellow was shouting something as he reached the side of the car.

Distantly, Dick heard his brother's voice:

"You did it, young 'un—won by a wheel! By glory, I've never seen such a finish!" He snatched Dick's right fist and pumped it up and down.

A moment later the officials reached the spot, and Dick was half-smothered by the giant bouquet which was thrust into his lap. Then, from the stand before which he had stopped, there came a veritable shower of things—flowers, hats, bags, money glittering in the sun, purses! The excitable Italian crowd was showering him with gifts.

"Here, let's get out of this!" Dick gasped, and a dozen hands aided him from the cockpit. He could hear better now, and it seemed to him that everybody in sight was cheering. Mechanics from the main Kent pit by the stands came bursting solidly through the crowd gathering around the machine.

They grabbed Dick's hands, and thumped his back, then hoisted him and Hurst to their shoulders—just as the Fiat, which was lying third, came storming through, slowing as it passed the finishing line. Dick saw both the driver and mechanic turn to look at the crowd and at himself as he was lifted up; both of them grinned, and the driver waved his congratulations as he slowed his machine.

Further up the road, Dick could see Lynch getting out of his car, around which there was another crowd. After that Dick was shouldered along the course to the front of the main stand, where the road was all but blocked by the crowd which had surged on to it. Soldiers were trying to keep the spectators back, to give room for cars which were still finishing the race.

Dick had a glimpse of a purple-lined box with steps leading up to it, and he realised that here was some celebrity who would award prizes. He was lowered to the ground, the crowd surging round while Bill yelled above the roar:

"It won't take long, Dick, then we'll get you out of it. You must be about all in—but what a finish! I saw that tyre go an' I thought you were done!"

"Hurst told me to keep going, so I chanced it!" Dick laughed through the

mask of dust and oil on his face. "I never thought we'd do it, because I——" He broke off as someone came pushing through. He was an official, and he held papers in his hands. He jabbered in Italian to Bill for a minute, his eyes shining excitedly.

"Says you did the fastest lap in the race last time round," Bill told Dick. "And you've put up a record for the fastest Targa Florio—your time was six hours and fifty-two minutes!"

Dick nodded. Somehow it didn't interest him. What he wanted was a long drink of lime-juice, a bath to get rid of some of the dust, and a little peace and quiet. He glanced at Hurst; the mechanic was swaying where he stood, and he looked as though he would have fallen but for the hands that supported him. Bill went on:

"Dick, you win a hundred thousand lire, the Targa Florio cup, and an armful of other cups, as well as a medal that the King of Italy gives!"

"Eh?" Dick blinked at him. "A hundred thousand——? What was that?"

"A hundred thousand lire—Italian money!" Bill grinned. "Here, hold up, young 'un!" He caught Dick as the latter reeled a little on his numbed feet. "I'll get you back to the racing camp as soon as I can!" He slipped an arm round Dick's shoulders and steadied him. "The prize is about four thousand pounds in English money."

"Four—thousand! My hat!" Dick gasped, and before he had time to say anything else, men in elaborate uniforms were making a gangway through the crowd and beckoning him towards the carpeted stairs.

He went, followed by the slightly swaying Hurst. At the top of the stairs was a table covered with a blue cloth edged with gold braid.

Several people were behind it, but Dick could see them but dimly. He was aware that somebody was making a speech, then the same man took his hand and shook it gently. After that an envelope was thrust towards him; he guessed that it contained the 100,000 lire, so he took it. Then came a cup, which he could barely hold, and, after that, a plush case containing a hefty-looking medal.

More cups were offered him, but he couldn't carry them all, so some were loaded on to Hurst. That seemed to be all that was required of them, so Dick stumbled on and down steps at the other side. Here a car waited, and he was helped into it. He discovered that the seats were smothered in flowers, and that the blooms lay ankle-deep on the floor.

There was a lot of wild cheering,

showers of confetti and more flowers, then the car rolled slowly away. He could feel Bill clumsily taking off his crash helmet and easing the straps on his wrist, but the rest was a blurred impression of being driven down the course until they turned off it and, at last, came to the white-walled building which formed the Kent racing camp.

"All over now!" Bill said cheerily, as the car stopped. "Make enough fuss about it, don't they, young 'un! No; don't try to stand up. Hi, some of you chaps—lift him up and carry him in!"

Lynch's Threat!

DICK had a bath in a tub that was half-full of rain-water. One of the mechanics who knew something about massage rubbed him down, and then Bill sat and watched him eat a light meal. Except for a lot of stiffness and an odd, constricted feeling at the back of his neck—this had come from bracing his head against the wind-pressure—Dick felt all right.

From the time that he got to the racing camp until he was able to take more notice of what was going on around, he saw nothing of Hurst.

"Some of the boys gave him the same treatment," Bill told him. "He's in bed now—too done up to move. He hasn't got the beef that you've got, Dick, but he must have the pluck of six men to stick what he's been through, because a mechanic gets all the knocks, you know. Matter of fact, it licks me how you've stood it so well."

Dick didn't answer, but down in his heart there was a thankful feeling that he'd been training so strictly for weeks past. He hadn't expected to drive in the Targa Florio, but he meant not to let the team down if the opportunity did come. At Monza, he had cracked up simply because he wasn't fit; here, he had gone through with the job because of his training.

It was quiet in the racing camp after the roar and strain. Most of the mechanics had gone out to bring in what was left of Bill's car, and to get the third machine in the Kent team—the one which had cracked up with a broken piston.

After the meal, Dick lifted a petrol can to the door of the building and squatted on it, watching the traffic of the little Sicilian street outside, and talking about the race with Bill.

Now and again the big fellow glanced at the boy, and in Bill's eyes there was

something like surprise. He could hardly realise that Dick had, indeed, won the race, narrow though the margin might have been. Bill had always regarded Dick as the "young 'un"—just a kid.

Now Bill saw him as somebody who could accomplish all that he himself could do. What bucked him more than anything else was that Dick didn't seem to think he'd done anything very much out of the way.

Bill liked him for that.

Dick himself didn't realise that he had achieved anything very extraordinary. Of course, the crowd had made a fuss at the finish, but they always did that, no matter who the winner might be. He had been lucky enough to get a car in the race, and

brought it off. But he was much happier out of the cheering crowds, squatting on a petrol tin and watching the traffic go by—until he saw someone whom he recognised.

It was Mark Lynch, on his way to the Ince Eight camp. In the moment that Dick saw him a mechanic came running down the street, grinning all over his face.

"There's been one large row down on the course!" he exclaimed, as he came up. "Lynch lodged a protest—said Dick fouled him on the straight, an' that the race finished a dead heat anyway! The judges laughed at him an'——" The man broke off as he, too, sighted the rival speedman.

Loaded up with cups and medals, Dick and Hurst staggered down the steps amid wild cheering from the enthusiastic crowd.



when everybody else in the Kent team had been knocked out of it, he had done his best to win. That was all there was to it.

Dick didn't think that anybody else might have funk'd the awful corners and the yawning gulfs, have been scared as the car rocked on the edges of the precipices and have eased up where the turns were dangerous. He'd simply driven with the idea of not letting old Bill down—and he hadn't let him down.

Of course, he was conscious of a warm, glowing sort of feeling because he had

Lynch had paused at the side of the road, and now he strode towards them. Dick eased his stiff figure off the petrol can and stood up as the man approached. Lynch's face was twisted to a fierce scowl, and as he came up he glared at Dick.

"You ought to have been warned off the track, you foul-ridin' young upstart!" he snarled. "Lucky for you the stewards had their eyes shut!"

"And it was lucky for you that they couldn't see what happened up on Poluzza Corner!" Bill exclaimed. "You cut in on

that Delage an' me, an' you crashed us both!"

"Don't talk rot! If you can't drive, keep off the track!" Lynch blared. "I was balked by him"—and he shook his fist at Dick—"when we were coming to the finish!"

"You weren't!" Dick exclaimed. "I burst a tyre, but I didn't balk you, and you know it! You tried that on me higher up the road, and you'd have done it again, only you were afraid of being seen!"

"Any talk like that from you, and I'll knock you flat!" Lynch snarled, as he strode closer. Dick could see that the man was almost beside himself with chagrin at his defeat, and at the scornful way the race officials had treated his appeal against the result.

Lynch's fist went back, and then came swinging forward—to be knocked aside by Bill's arm. The man turned on the big fellow, lashing out madly; it was then Dick remembered that his brother had a broken rib, and that his body was swathed in bandages.

He leaped between the two of them, trying to shove them apart. The mechanic standing near jumped to aid him. From the street, passers-by came running, and Lynch was dragged off, leaving Bill swaying on his feet, his face drained of all its colour, because one of Lynch's fists had crashed home on his wound.

Lynch was held back by an excited, jabbering crowd. Some Ince Eight mechanics from his own camp came up and tried to hustle him away. He fought against them as he turned and yelled:

"I'll settle with you at Seacombe Sands, Barry! I'll have my revenge with the Giant Ince!"

"You're welcome to it, if you can beat us for the record!" Bill told him.

Alarming News!

TWO days later, the Kent racing team left the scene of the Targa Florio, homeward bound. In a carefully-guarded crate lay the trophies which Dick's machine had won.

A huge crowd gathered to watch the cars shipped—Dick's with its damaged wheel repaired; No. 2 with its engine in running order again, and Bill's machine a mass of dented wreckage that could not be touched until it had been got back to the works.

Lynch and the Ince Eights had gone the day after the race. Dick and Bill knew that the rival speedman was caten up with the idea of getting the Giant Ince ready.

"He'll get her out on Seacombe Sands

and try to smash Segrave's record. If he does, it'll make up for us winning the Targa Florio," Bill said. "You see, breaking that record will make the Ince machines known all over the world, and our win will look like nothing at all beside it."

"Well, what about our Kent Flyer?" asked Dick. "If she's ready, we can go up there and beat anything that Lynch can do."

Bill said nothing to that, and Dick wondered why.

Two days of swift travelling passed before Dick again saw the familiar front of the Kent works. The doors were standing wide when they drove up in a lorry, which carried the machine that had won the race. Beyond the wide gates stood every man in the works, with Professor Kent at the head of them.

There was one mighty cheer, and then a mad rush. Dick was dragged down and carried round the works, finally to be shouldered into the body-building shop. All the tools and equipment had been pushed to the walls, and down the centre was a table loaded with food.

This was a celebration which Professor Kent had arranged. Dick and Bill, the racing mechanics and the other drivers were placed at the head of the table, in the centre of which stood the trophies they had won.

After the meal, Dick made straight for the shed where repairs to the Kent Flyer were being carried out. The car stood without wheels or body; but everything else about her was fresh with new metal, and the engine had already been put in.

"I've had her on test," the professor told them, "and I think she'll be as good as ever. There's a lot to be done still, but there's no hurry."

"There is!" Bill exclaimed gruffly. "Lynch is going to take the big Ince up to Seacombe, and from the way he talks he'll either smash himself up or else he'll break the record. And if he breaks the record, we've got to be there to beat his best!"

"Yes, but there's plenty of time," the grey-haired professor said slowly. "We can't rush a job like this."

"We've got to rush it!" Bill insisted. "You built this car with the idea of bringing prosperity to the firm, and to do that we've got to keep in front of Lynch, all the time! We must get that record and keep it, and if he breaks it, we've got to get it back! It's a case of day and night work on that machine until she's ready again."

The professor hated to be rushed. In

rebuilding the car he had incorporated one or two new ideas that he wanted leisure to think over. He tried to protest.

"Look here," said Bill, "I'm walking about with a busted rib, but that won't stop me handling this machine when she's fit to run. Listen, professor; suppose Lynch goes up to Seacombe Sands and breaks the record, he'll get a lot of fame and kudos out of it. If we go up a week later and beat the new record he's made, there won't be half so much fuss about it—and fuss means advertisement, and advertisement means selling more Kent cars.

"On the other hand, if Lynch gets the record and we take the Flyer out half an hour later, and go faster than he went—think what that'll mean! Everybody'll hear about it, and it'll be us and not the Ince people who get all the glory. I'm in this shed now, and in this shed I stop—sleep or no sleep—until this car's made ready!"

And as he spoke, Bill took off his coat. Dick took his off, as well.

The professor looked at them. Standing in the doorway were a number of the men who had been working with the racing team in the Targa Florio and, before that, on this car. They stepped into the shed and, one by one, slipped out of their coats and reached for their overalls.

"All right," said the professor, and he smiled slowly. "Have it your way, Billy. I think you must be right."

"I know I'm right," Bill answered crisply. "Now, where's Hurst? Ah, there you are! All right, Hurst, don't put that boiler suit on, you've earned a rest one way and another. I want you to go up to Seacombe, and keep an eye on what Lynch is doing with the Giant Ince. If he breaks the big record before we get up there with this machine, wire immediately, and also keep the timing officials up on the job. We'll come there with this bus straight away!"

Hurst nodded, talked over some minor details and then left. Ere another hour had passed men were working busily around the big machine, and the work continued without a break for a full thirty-six hours.

Dick worked with them. He worked until he was almost dropping from lack of sleep; then, like the others, he snatched an hour or two's rest on sacks in the loft above.

It was when they were balancing the wheels, almost the last thing to be done, that news came from Hurst in the form of a long telegram. He said that Lynch was up on the sands and, that afternoon, he had taken out the Giant Ince Eight; the

springing of the machine had been altered, and now she sat the sands steadily. She had covered the measured mile at 190 m.p.h., and timing officials were going to be on the sands in the morning, when the big car would go for the record.

"Well, we ought to be ready!" Bill growled. "Another twelve hours on this machine, and she should be fit to go!"

So they worked through the night. At ten o'clock in the morning, the balanced wheels passed their final test. By eleven, the wearied mechanics stepped back from the machine, their job done.

And as the clock in the works tower chimed the hour, a messenger-boy came through the door. His eyes goggled at sight of the fierce-visaged record-smasher, and he still stared at the machine as he handed a telegram to Bill.

Dick and the professor craned forward, as the big fellow slit the orange envelope and drew out the message inside:

LYNCH BROKE RECORD WITH 205 M.P.H.
OFFICIALLY TIMED AT TEN-THIRTY THIS
MORNING. BRING UP THE FLYER AND BEAT
HIM.

HURST.

The Flyer's Challenge!

THE tired-looking mechanics in the big shed watched big Bill as he read the telegram. They were wiping their hands on oily swabs; some of them still carried on their lips smiles of proud satisfaction as they looked from the powerful lines of the record-breaker to the broad-shouldered speed-man.

Once again Dick read the telegram, craning over Bill's arm to see the scrawled words.

"Lynch has done it!" Bill gasped, and he looked up suddenly, meeting the eyes of the men who had worked night and day to fit their own car for her attack on the world's speed record. "He's done it, boys—two hundred an' five miles an hour! It's up to us, now."

For a few seconds, nobody said anything. The telegraph messenger-boy continued to stare at the speed-lines of the low-built Kent Flyer, his eyes goggling at sight of the wonderful machine. At Dick's side, the professor rubbed his chin and frowned thoughtfully. Presently one of the mechanics growled:

"That's what we've been workin' for, ain't it, Bill? Ain't we been gettin' the Flyer ready so's we could rush up there and beat whatever speed Lynch put up?"

"We have!" grunted Bill. He glanced

at his watch. "It's just after eleven o'clock. There's time to get up there, if we look slippy. Joey Hurst will have kept the officials on the sands." Bill looked towards the grey-haired professor. "Any objection to us taking the Flyer up straight away?" he asked.

The professor did not answer for a moment. Dick could see that his hands were shaking a little as he rubbed his chin, but the boy did not realise why the professor was nervous.

This moment was the climax to months of work. The Kent Flyer had been built with the sole idea of smashing the great record that Major Segrave had made months before at Daytona Beach, in America—just over 203 miles an hour. Lynch's firm had built their Giant Ince Eight with the same idea—and Lynch had smashed Segrave's record!

The Flyer must go up to Seacombe Sands that day and break the new record

that Lynch had set up, otherwise all the work of the professor and Bill and the mechanics would go for naught.

The Flyer had been designed to bring fame to the firm; fame meant more business, and more business meant putting the Kent Works on its feet. It was no good waiting a day or two and then breaking the new record; it must be done at once, before Lynch's firm had any time to reap the benefit of what they had done that day.

But the Flyer was as yet untried. The professor had supervised the rebuilding of the wonderful machine with the utmost care, yet even he could not say that the car was perfect. The news which the telegram had brought demanded that they take the car just as it was, and set it to smash the record straight away—to do it without any tests or any trials.

And if the car failed them, if it failed to break Lynch's record while it was still fresh, they would be completely done for, and in a little while the Kent Works would go broke.

It wasn't surprising, then, that the professor's hands shook, or that he considered a few moments before he said:

"Just as you like, Bill. I certainly think that—that it would be better if you took the car to the sands immediately, providing you're game to—"

"Game? You bet we're game, sir!" a mechanic exclaimed suddenly. "What d'you think we've all been working for? Let's get on the job, Bill!"

The big fellow grinned suddenly, and his eyes lit up as he crushed the telegram in his fist. He swung round to Dick.

"Young 'un, bring round the big five-ton lorry. You know the one I mean—the fast six-cylinder. Two of you lend him a hand, and step lively! Stack the spares by the door ready for loading. Harry, bring a light lorry round. Professor, will you get a tourer here, and we'll go up in that."

Inside twenty seconds, the shed was humming with life, while Dick dashed to the other side of the works for the lorry that Bill wanted, and which was to carry the Flyer up to the scene of the speed-fight.

The lorry was a big, low-built affair, the fastest in the works, and planned to carry

heavy loads over the roads at speed. In a little while Dick had it backed up to the building housing the Flyer. More men were called out from the near-by sheds to help.

The news of the telegram spread round the works. Men downed tools and came crowding round to give a hand. A hundred muscular arms aided to roll the Flyer up sloping planks on to the lorry, and the car was

lashed there, covered by a huge tarpaulin.

A light lorry was loaded with tools and spares, and mechanics climbed aboard it. Within thirty minutes of the arrival of the telegram they were all ready to leave.

The professor slipped behind the wheel of a touring car; Bill dropped into the seat behind him, and Dick climbed in behind. Every man in the works crowded to the big gates as the touring machine led the way out.

Upon the morning air there lifted a rousing cheer as the three vehicles rolled to the main road, and started on their swift run to Seacombe Sands to challenge the thundering speed of the Giant Ince!

A Race Against the Tide!

JUST before they left, Bill sent a wire to Hurst, telling him that they were on the way. Bill knew that he would read this wire to the reporters

A NOTE OF WARNING.

Members of the St. Frank's League are warned against having any dealings with any persons calling themselves "high officials" or "representatives" of the League.

The St. Frank's League is run entirely from this office by correspondence, and the Chief Officer can take no responsibility for the bona fides of any person who may approach members personally with the object of organising camps, excursions, etc., under the auspices of the League.

and the pressmen gathered on the sands; they would understand that the Flyer was racing up to do its best to shatter the new record, and they would certainly stop to see what happened.

The works was left no more than a mile behind before Dick saw Bill pull a type-written sheet from his pocket. Dick knew that this was a table showing the state of the tide at Seacombe at various hours of the day. The big fellow scanned it for a minute or two, then leaned towards the professor and yelled something which Dick could not catch.

But the result was an immediate increase in the speed of the car. Thirty yards behind, the big lorry carrying the Flyer also increased its speed, and soon they were touching sixty miles an hour wherever opportunity offered, with the lorry doing its best also to hit a mile a minute gait.

Dick realised that Bill was trying to make certain that they got to Seacombe Sands before the tide came in. No doubt Lynch had broken the record the moment that the sea left the sands clear. They had got to get the Flyer running before the tide returned, otherwise they would have to wait until the next morning to make the attempt—and the morrow would be too late.

Dick snuggled down in his seat, out of the wind. Now and again he looked back at the two vehicles behind. Both were sticking the pace grimly, and the covered bulk of the Kent Flyer looked oddly purposeful; the twitching of the tarpaulin made it seem as though the car was crouching ready to leap off. The lorry the moment that they arrived.

He thought about the other time they had been to the sands, when the Flyer had touched terrific speeds in her tests, and Lynch had afterwards fired the barn in which the car stood. Obviously he had got the Giant right since then; but if the re-built Flyer was anything like as ready for her task as she had been before, she'd make the Giant's 205 m.p.h. look slow.

Dick wondered how Bill was going to drive with a broken rib; he guessed that the big fellow's hurt was better. Perhaps it didn't affect him very much, or not enough to stop him driving.

The three machines thundered on, mile after mile sliding under the spinning wheels until, ahead, Dick got a glimpse of the glittering blue of sunlit sea. They slowed through the town of Seacombe, and a little while after they were moving along the coast road with the sand-dunes hiding the ocean.

Quite suddenly, they came in sight of the inn which marked the long stretch of

sands, and Dick saw that in front of the dunes was parked row upon row of motor-cars. The space before the inn was jammed tight by an enormous crowd, while, on either side and as far as the eye could reach, the course for the speed trials had been marked out by flags stuck a hundred yards apart.

Thousands of spectators were on the spot, and there was a mighty crowd centred round some object which, Dick guessed, must be the Giant Ince.

As the touring car and the lorries rolled up, hundreds of faces turned to look. With raucous electric-horn screaming its warning, the touring machine rolled down the slope to the sands, spectators parting on either side.

The machine braked to a stop near a little crowd of officials gathered about a table set at the end of a black timing strip running out across the sands towards the sea.

As he slipped out of the car, Dick saw the crowd running from around the Giant Ince and coming to get first glimpse of the Kent Flyer. While, amongst the men at the table, he caught a glimpse of the lean, saturnine features and the grinning lips of Mark Lynch.

The Flyer in Peril !

BIG BILL and the professor stepped up to the table, Dick behind them, and shook hands with an official, who rose from a seat behind the carefully-protected instruments which stood there.

"You've got just under an hour before the tide comes in," the official said to them. "Do you think you can get it over in that time?"

"We've got to," answered Bill crisply. "If you're all ready for us, I'll make a couple of test runs, and then go for the record. What were the Giant's figures?"

"Two hundred and five miles an hour—dead time," the man answered. "Everything's set for you as soon as you like to get your machine on the course."

"We'll get her off the lorry and started up right away," Bill answered, then spun round and strode to the big machine which was carrying the Flyer.

"Come on, Dick," he added, turning to the boy, who had been listening with interest. "We've got to put a jerk into it—and we've got to beat Lynch's record!"

(And you can bet Big Bill and Dick will go all out to do that. But unexpected things always seem to crop up at a critical time, and that's exactly what happens next week—just when the Kent Flyer is being put through her test run. Don't miss the next long instalment of this thrilling serial.)

HOW TO JOIN THE LEAGUE

ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE APPLICATION FORM No. 90.

SECTION

A

READER'S APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP.

I desire to become enrolled as a Member of THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE, and to qualify for all such benefits and privileges as are offered to Members of the League. I hereby declare that I have introduced "THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY" and THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE to one new reader, whose signature to certify this appears on second form attached hereto. Will you, therefore, kindly forward me Certificate of Enrolment with the Membership Number assigned to me, and Membership Badge.

SECTION

B

MEMBER'S APPLICATION FOR MEDAL AWARDS.

I, Member No..... (give Membership No.), hereby declare that I have introduced one more new reader, whose signature to certify this appears on second form attached hereto. This makes me..... (state number of introductions up to date) introductions to my credit.

SECTION

C

NEW READER'S DECLARATION.

I hereby declare that I have been introduced by (give name of introducer) to this issue of "THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY."

(FULL NAME).....

(ADDRESS).....

INSTRUCTIONS.

INSTRUCTIONS.—Reader Applying for Membership. Cut out TWO complete Application Forms from Two copies of this week's issue of THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY. On one of the forms leave in Section A, crossing out Sections B and C. Then write clearly your full name and address at bottom of form. The second form is for your new reader; who fills in Section C, crosses out Sections A and B, and writes his name and address at bottom of form. Both forms are then pinned together, and sent to the Chief Officer, The St. Frank's League, c/o THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4. **Member Applying for Bronze Medal:** It will be necessary for you to obtain six new readers for this award. For each new reader TWO complete forms, bearing the same number, are needed. On one of the forms fill in Section B, crossing out Sections A and C, and write your name and address at bottom of form. The other form is for your new reader, who fills in Section C, crosses out Sections A and B, and writes his name and address at the bottom of

the form. Now pin both forms together and send them to the Chief Officer, as above. One new reader will then be registered against your name, and when six new readers have been registered, you will be sent the St. Frank's League bronze medal. There is nothing to prevent you from sending in forms for two or more new readers at once, provided that each pair of forms bears the same date and number.

Bronze medallists wishing to qualify for the silver or gold medals can apply in the same way as for the bronze medal, filling in Section B. Every introduction they make will be credited to them, so that when the League reaches the required number of members they can exchange their bronze medal for a silver or gold one, according to the number of introductions with which they are credited.

These Application Forms can be posted for 3d., providing the envelope is not sealed and no letter is enclosed.

A FEW OF THE ADVANTAGES OF JOINING THE LEAGUE.

You can write to fellow members living at home or in the most distant outposts of the Empire.

You are offered free advice on choosing a trade or calling, and on emigration to the colonies and dependencies.

If you want to form a sports or social club, you can do so amongst local members of the League.

You are offered free hints on holidays, whether walking, biking or camping.

You can qualify for the various awards by promoting the growth of the League.

If you want help or information on any subject, you will find the Chief Officer ever ready to assist you.



Our Weekly Pow-Wow

By
The Editor.

A Teaser.

An Australian chum asks me to tell him "all about London." That's soon done. London is a bit of a village nestling on the banks of the Thames. It has a Tower at one end and the Serpentine at the other. The Serpentine is well liked by bathers who break their way through the ice for a morning dip. Of course, there are other things to be said about London. It is, humanly speaking, a very considerable section of the world. Oddly enough, the seven millions of Londoners know less about the place than anybody.

Letter Writing.

I was chatting with Mr. Brooks the other day about the letters we get when he showed me a communication he had had from a reader at West Bridgford, Notts. This was a model of an interesting letter. It was something unusual, too. The writer was an artist as well as being clever. There were jolly little sketches in the middle and down the margins. Of course, it is not everyone who has the time or the knack to turn out an illustrated letter, though I am disposed to think that a lot of the letters "written in haste" might have had a dash of leisure allowed them. The result would have been far more interesting. Anyway, congrats go to Mr. Brooks' Bridgford chum, for he devoted care to his letter, and made you go through it again and then a third time.

THE EDITOR.
(Chief Officer.)

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